Jim Crow in the Old "New South"

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Saturday Review

April 1, 1978

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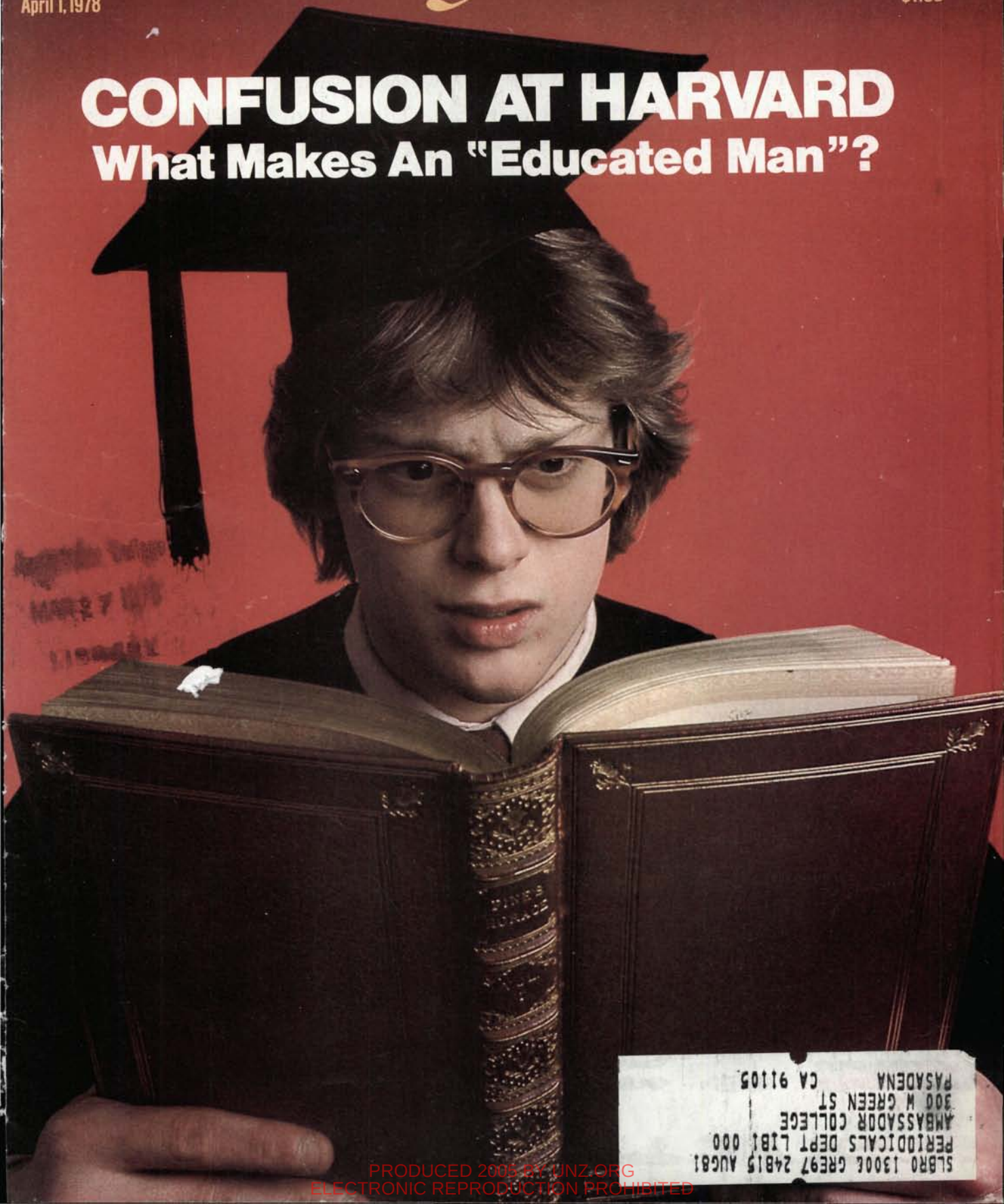
CONFUSION AT HARVARD

What Makes An "Educated Man"?



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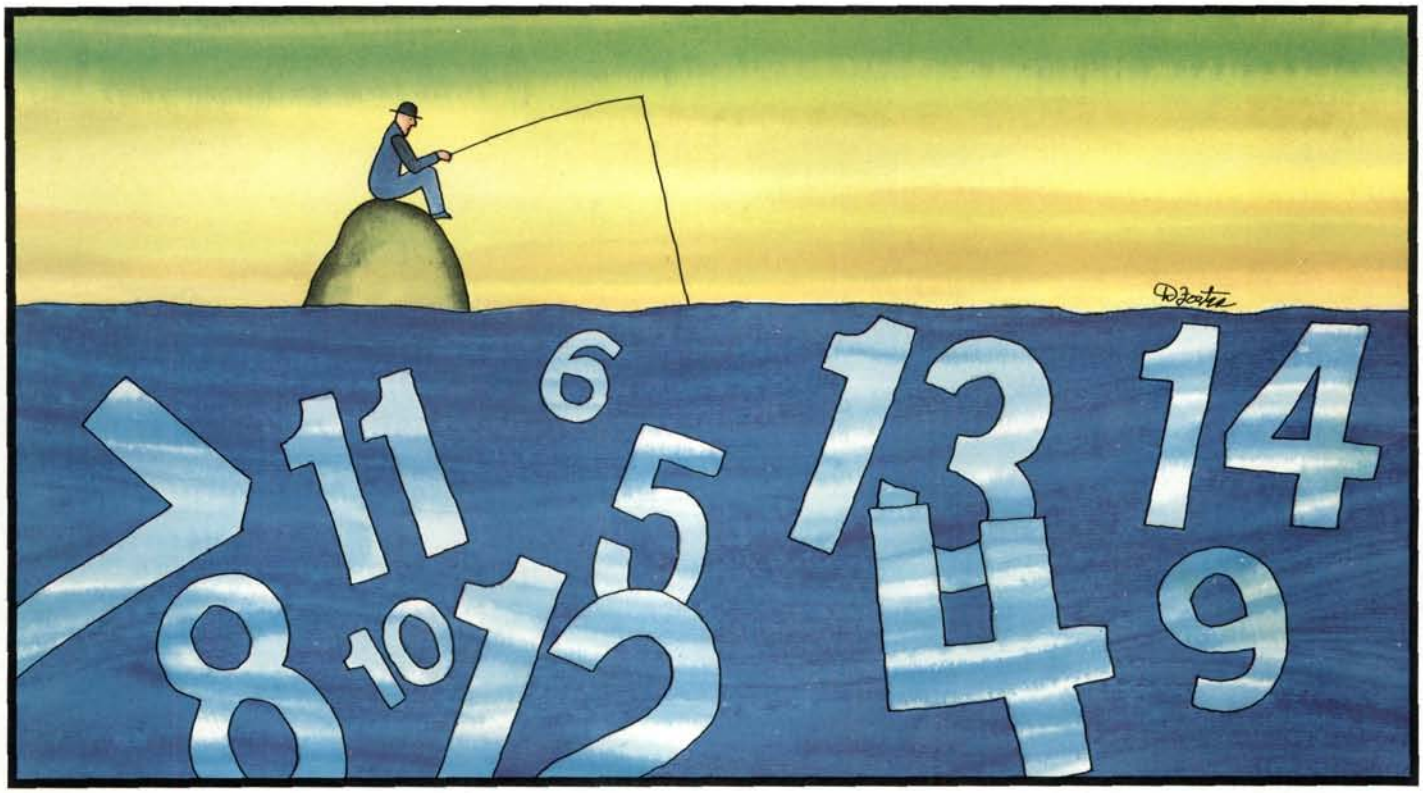

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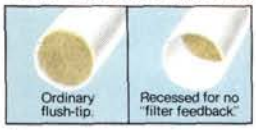

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10 mg Kings
12 mg 100's

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Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

Kings: 10 mg "tar," 0.6 mg nicotine—
100's: 12 mg "tar," 0.7 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report, Aug.77.

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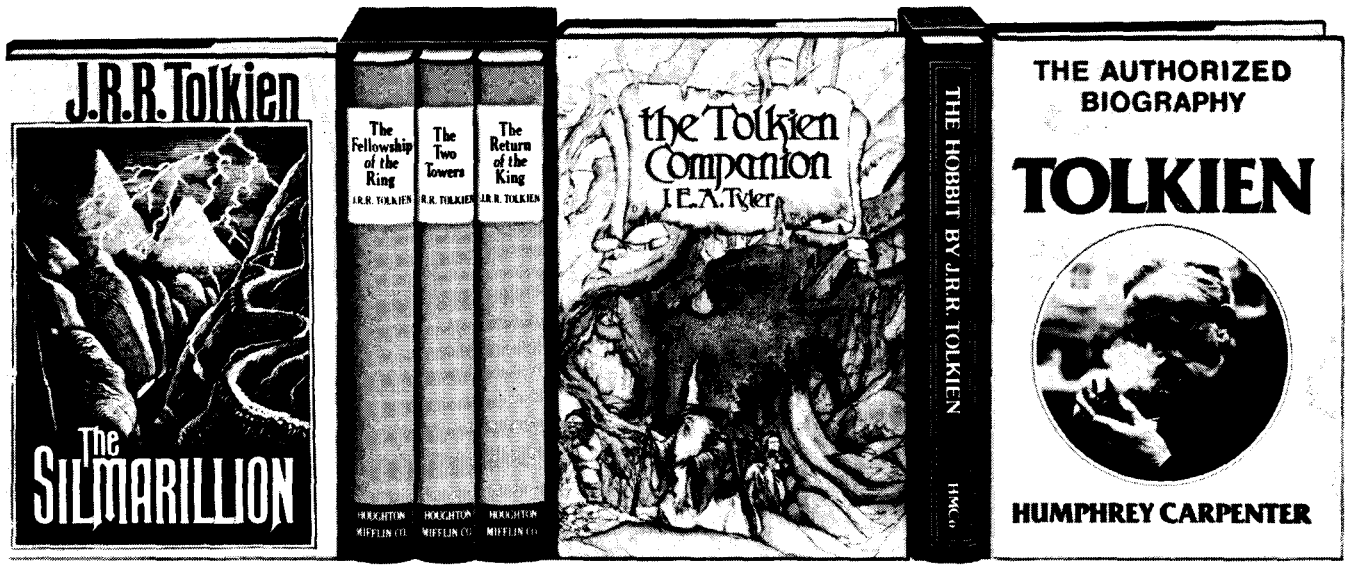

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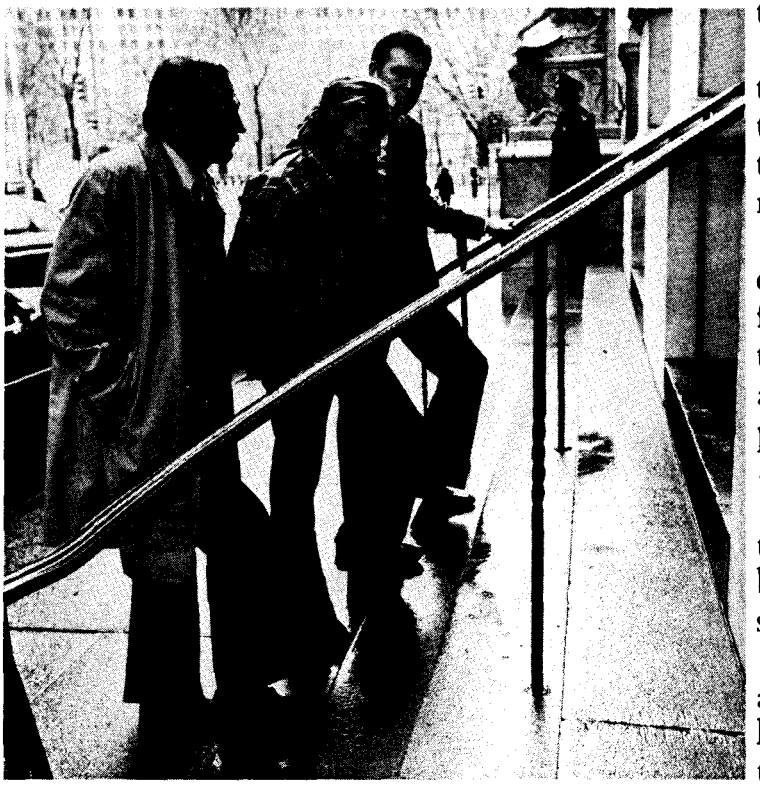

But in recent months, two cities, Houston and Seattle, have pointed out the way to bring down the alarming rate of arson.

Both have placed emphasis on a long-neglected facet of fire fighting: fire investigating. Firemen have become adept at policemen's work; policemen have become adept at firemen's work.

In Seattle, particularly, the insurance industry has become involved in helping to spot instances of arson.

The result: while all across the country arson is looked at as a growth stock in the criminal's stock-in-trade, Seattle and Houston have actually experienced significant reductions in the number of cases of arson and substantial increases in the number of arrests. Proof, maybe, that those two statistics go hand in hand.

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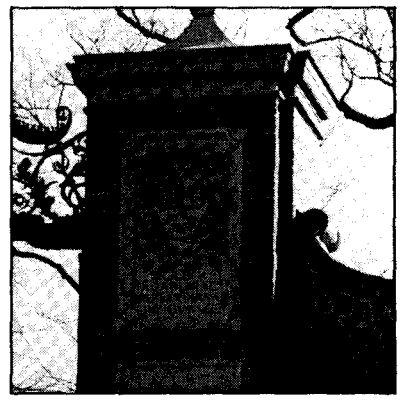

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Cosmic Curiosity

THE CONGRESS of the United States is now scrutinizing America's ventures into outer space. The central question being considered is whether the American people are going to receive enough tangible benefits from the space program to justify its expense.

The attempt of the Congress to put the emphasis on practical value is understandable, but the main case for space exploration rests on philosophical grounds. The justification for penetrating outer space has something to do with the way we see ourselves as a people and as a nation; how we think about our place in a distant future; how much value we assign to the possibility that knowledge can contribute to the quality of life on earth; and finally, the importance we attach to any sense of a universal design.

An evocative description of this philosophical purpose comes from one of our readers, Lawrence Mason, Jr., a graduate teaching assistant at Syracuse University. "From the dawn of humanity, when man-apes became aware of their environment," Mr. Mason writes, "the stars were of overriding importance. We have dreamed, longed, wondered, watched, and examined those same flickering points of light. Now, as black holes, quasars, and pulsars beckon to us, our ancestors push us forward and whisper in our ears, 'Go, spread our immortality throughout the universe.' It is a uniquely human desire, wanting to announce ourselves to the cosmos."

This yen to become earth-wanderers among the stars, however, involves more than the need to satisfy a cosmic curiosity. Basically, it flows out of an instinctive need to evolve. We belong to an unfinished species. We have limitless capacities for growth; indeed, our uniqueness lies in our ability to steer our own evolution. The destination becomes visible through an enlarged perspective. The greatest adventure within the reach of a sentient species is seeing itself in an expanding relationship. The creatures in Plato's allegory of the cave could not conceive of anything beyond their constricted domain and therefore were consigned to, and limited by, a perpetual darkness. We have no way of knowing how much new light we can let into our lives or the corners of our minds by breaking out of our cave, but there can be no doubt that we will be changed in the process.

It is only a few hundred years since the human species was able to liberate itself from the notion that the earth was the center of the universe. The larger perspective afforded by Copernicus played an important part in the forward thrust of human development. The Age of Reason and the Age of Enlightenment were not unrelated to that discovery. But we are only now beginning to possess a genuine awareness of our relationship to the total scheme of things; and we can expect that human progress will be proportionate to our comprehension of our place in the universal design.

Our spaceships are important not because they are capable of breaking out of the earth's gravitational field but because they are extensions of the human mind. They are not so much an assemblage of lightweight metals as they are a new language. The language speaks to human potentiality and to new options available to us as a nation and as a species. Every new experience, every new adventure, yields a new harvest in language. The words produced by our forays into the universe will transcend technology.

To paraphrase H. G. Wells, human history is a race between combat and cooperation, between concepts of service and concepts of power. If the outcome of that race is not to end in disaster, new unifying principles have to be put into effect. The species must develop a sense of the whole, a reverence for its life-support systems, and an understanding of the limitless capacity of human beings to meet any dangers within their comprehension. Knowledge is a solvent of danger.

The greatness of any society in history has seldom rested on its physical prowess. The vaunted military power of ancient Athens has long since disappeared. But the ideas of ancient Greece have proved far more durable than its fighting ships. The words of Aristotle and Plato stand even taller and more powerful today than they did 2,400 years ago.

The scrapings from the surface of the moon brought back to earth, significant as they are, are not as meaningful as the perceptions carried back in our minds. The biggest moon dividend is an enlarged awareness of the rarity and preciousness of human life. We also possess new evidence of our ability to adjust to ever-increasing complexity. In this sense, what outer space has most to offer humans is an increased respect for the importance of inner space and for the workings of the mind.

The human brain is a mirror to infinity. There is no limit to its range, scope, or creative growth. New perspectives lead to new perceptions, just as they clear the way for all sorts of new prospects in human affairs. Supposedly, only half the human brain is being put to effective use. No one knows what great leaps of achievement may be within the reach of the species once the full potential of the mind is developed. As we create an ever-higher sense of our cosmic consciousness, to paraphrase Richard Bucke, we become aware of our ever-higher possibilities and challenges.

It is in this perspective that space exploration must be seen. Anything that ignites the human mind, anything that sets the collective intelligence to racing, anything that creates a new horizon for human hopes, anything that helps to enlarge the vocabulary of common heritage and common destiny—anything that does this is of incalculable value.

Some people will say we have no business in journeying beyond the planet until we make our own abode on earth safe and fit for human habitation. Yet it is precisely because our species is in jeopardy that we have to think and act on a universal plane rather than as members of hostile tribes. A rendezvous with the cosmos is a transcendent occasion and could become a transcendent process.

If it is asked, then, what it is we get in return for our probes in space, the answer is that we get a chance to develop a proper appreciation for our station in the universe. It is also quite possible that such ventures might bring the world's peoples a little closer to one another. Americans can congratulate themselves that they are in a position to take giant steps beyond their planet—not just for themselves but for the astonishingly varied, gifted, frail, and vulnerable species of which they are a part. —N.C.

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Letters from Readers

Energetic Alternatives

In his article "The Corporation as Public Enemy No. 1" [January 21], David W. Ewing's statement that antinuclear power activists have proposed no alternative program to nuclear power is exactly what most industries would have us believe—that our choice for the future is simply between nuclear energy and no energy at all. Nothing could be farther from the truth. I could write pages and pages on the number of proposals that have been made in the areas of conservation and alternative energy sources. As just one example, there is at this time legislation before Congress that would ban energy-wasting no-return bottles. I am sure that there are many who will vote against such legislation and then go right on insisting that our nation "needs" nuclear power.

Last November, I participated in the occupation of the Trojan nuclear power plant near Portland, Oregon. Our stated objective was to close the plant, but we tried to make it as clear as possible that we were pro-conservation and pro-solar energy as much as we were anti-nuclear power.

Ewing's belief that people's fear of nuclear power is "irrational" is erroneous to the point of being ridiculous. If the fear of nuclear power is so irrational, why then is there not one insurance company willing to insure a nuclear power plant against accidents?

Ewing is certainly headed in the right direction when he concludes that American industry must learn to listen to public opinion, but he is very optimistic if he believes that listening is enough. I personally will be very happy when utility executives actually listen to all that has been said against nuclear power, but because my fears are very rational and because I know that there are very viable alternatives, I will not stop occupying nuclear power plants until they are shut down.

Greg Moore
Ketchum, Idaho

Ruckus Over Open Admissions

Several years ago, *Saturday Review* published an article entitled "Will Everyman Destroy the University?" It dealt with the impact and effects that open enrollment might have on the City College of New York in particular and on the nation's universities in general.

Theodore L. Gross's article "How to Kill a College" [February 4, 1978] resoundingly answers that earlier question, unfortunately in the affirmative.

I agree with 90 percent of what Dean Gross has to say. As an English teacher in a junior college, however, I must disagree with his patronizing attitude toward the two-year school. Students who cannot, or can barely, read and write are out of place in any respectable college's milieu. Sending them to us is merely passing the buck.

If anyone really knows what to do with the "new students," now that they are matriculating by the thousands into our college systems, he has not yet come forth with his annunciation.

R. L. Cowser, Jr.
Wharton County Junior College
Wharton, Tex.

You have rendered all of us a service by publishing Theodore Gross's excellent piece on City College. May you and he prosper and turn aside the assaults no doubt in store from a crowd of simplifiers. As Elmer Davis used to say, "Don't let them scare you." Let your candor and courage loose again soon, to hearten people who deserve it.

Paul Gagnon, Professor
University of Massachusetts
Boston, Mass.

On behalf of the entire City College community, I must express disappointment with the sensational and entirely inappropriate manner in which you featured Dean Theodore Gross's article. Furthermore, in your editorial introduction to the article, you demonstrate a shocking lack of understanding of the nature and history of open admissions by relating open admissions to the *Bakke* case. The former provides open access to some form of higher education to students of *all* ethnic groups whereas the latter deals with the use of ethnic criteria in a limited-access situation. Moreover, you fail to point out that open admissions was introduced into the great state universities long before the "student rebellions of the late Sixties."

Your readers should also know that in matters of fact, particularly with regard to the creation of ethnic studies departments, Dean Gross's account is inaccurate. For example, the first ethnic studies department was created at City College in 1969—before the advent of open admissions—and not in 1971. Dean Gross blames the decline of interest in the humanities on the creation of the ethnic studies departments; enrollment in the humanities nationally declined from 9 percent to 5 percent during the period

Business '78, a monthly column about business and finance, begins with this issue.

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from 1969 to 1975, quite independent of the existence of ethnic studies departments.

In addition, Dean Gross's use of sexual, racial, and religious stereotypes is profoundly insulting to our student body and faculty. Contrast his statement "The blacks and Puerto Ricans and Asians arriving at the City College came from working-class families in which television and radio were the exclusive sources of information" with Charles Frankel's statement, in the December 1977 issue of *Change* magazine, "No one can deny that newspapers, radio, and television obsess the modern mind. They make virtues of glibness, of keeping up with the latest style in thought and feeling, of instant knowledge and instant judgment." Professor Frankel is trying to analyze a contemporary problem while Dean Gross is trying to find a scapegoat.

Robert E. Marshak, President
City College of New York
New York, N.Y.

Dean Gross replies: The title and subtitle of my essay on open admissions—"How to Kill a College: The Private Papers of a Campus Dean"—were written by the editorial staff of *Saturday Review*, without my knowledge or approval. My own title was "Open Admissions: A Confessional Meditation," and there were no graphics in my manuscript.

Any disinterested reader of my essay will see that I have not used sexual, racial, and religious stereotypes; and he will not need to know that I have spent the past 20 years doing research and writing my various books: *Dark Symphony: Negro Literature in America* (1968), *A Nation of Nations* (1971), and *The Literature of American Jews* (1973). I only regret that space did not allow me to amplify upon the Urban Educational Model at City College, which has seen the creation of centers in biomedical education, legal education, and the performing arts, among other efforts, as well as to suggest solutions to the problems I describe. But my essay, as readers have realized, is the first chapter of a book on the humanities in urban education. The rest of the story will be told in subsequent chapters.

Double Jeopardy

Some years ago, talk of Quebec's splitting off from Canada was dismissed as a species of political nonsense. Yet we now find that a separate Quebec is a serious political prospect, carrying the danger of a chain reaction of secessionist movements in other Canadian provinces as well.

It is not too early, therefore, for the American people to oppose resolutely the secessionist efforts now starting up on the tiny island of LaFlore, southeast of Savannah.

The people of LaFlore—like their brethren from Martha's Vineyard, who were making similar noises last summer—have announced their intention to join up with France, thus giving the Quebecois an important ally on the Atlantic Coast. Although no more than 12 kilometers square, LaFlore does have a certain potential for causing trouble with the American mainland. Unknown to many, the island is, at its centermost part, the world's largest single source of nutrium. Nutrium, as we know, is the principal ingredient in the production of satellite nuclear trigger systems, the failure of which, and consequences therefrom, have become all too familiar to our northern neighbor in the past few months.

Obviously, the encouragement being offered by the French government to Quebec as well as to LaFlore separatists has ominous implications for the United States. The fact that Congressman A. F. Day has openly supported independence for LaFlore is reason enough to be alarmed.

How, one might ask, can the 5,000 residents of a nonstrategic stretch of offshore beach defend their bid for autonomy against overwhelming American power? The answer is surprisingly simple, as witness this recent statement by Representative Day's good friend, the governor of LaFlore, Henri de la Imholtz: "Let's face it. If you've got nutrium, you've got the bomb."

Nothing could be more hazardous than for Americans to ignore the tendencies now observable in LaFlore. Today's absurdities have a way of becoming tomorrow's realities.

K. Jason Sitewell
New York, N.Y.

Editor's Note: Through an unfortunate error in processing, color separations for an illustration accompanying the article "The Mystery of the Ghent Altarpiece" [March 4] were reversed. *SR* regrets this error.

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Front Runners

In Darkest Africa

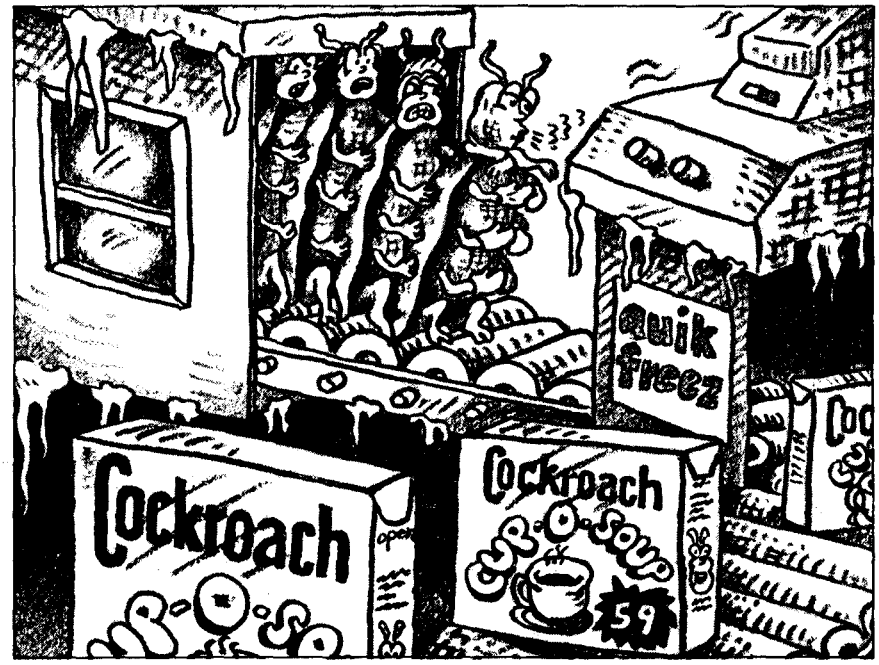
A nightmarish fate has overtaken a South African white woman named Rita Hoefling. Several years ago, Cape Town doctors started giving Hoefling strong drugs to combat the growth of a tumor in her brain. Not long after that, her skin gradually turned so noticeably swarthy that apartheid-conscious people began eyeing her, wondering aloud whether she was a "colored"—someone of racially mixed background.

At that point, the nightmare commenced: Hoefling's husband and son fled the house and have not returned; family friends abruptly stopped seeing her; and local businesses refused to give her work.

"I'm ready to scream," Hoefling told an AP reporter. "I cannot even begin to count the number of times I've been ordered off buses by conductors saying that colored persons ... are not allowed on." Desperate, she finally obtained a card certifying that she is "white." But even that, she says, "doesn't help and leads to terribly embarrassing situations.... [Just] this week I got on a bus coming from ... a hospital where I am a volunteer worker, and the driver told me to get off. He said he was not interested in my special card."

Her sixteen-year-old daughter was also ordered off a "whites only" bus when the driver remembered seeing her on other buses with her "colored" mother. Her son, meanwhile, has settled in Durban—some 800 miles away. He has not seen her in four years, Hoefling says, "because he [is] embarrassed at the change in his mother. ... Now I know what apartheid is like at its worst."

But she may well be wrong about knowing apartheid at its worst. So far, as a "colored" she has been treated with relative leniency; but if her skin gets darker and darker, as some doctors think it may, she could eventually be mistaken not for a colored but for a black African. In that case, she will experience dimensions of apartheid that presently she does not dream of.



Stephen McCoy

Grasshoppers al Dente

Put aside those silly dietary prejudices—insects may well be the coming side dish in our protein-scarce future.

Cornell's Professor David Pimentel thinks that instead of eating foods doused with antibug poisons we should stop spraying and instead *start eating* the bugs, since "they have the same high protein content as their cousin arthropods shrimp and lobsters." Pimentel is further quoted in the *New Age Journal* as saying, "No one has demonstrated that eating small plant-feeding insects, dead or alive, poses any health hazard."

Meanwhile, as if on cue, two Fairleigh Dickinson University researchers have just come up with a way of grinding and freeze-drying cockroaches, which converts them to a gray powder that the researchers say has a pleasant odor. According to the Yonkers, N.Y., *Herald Statesman*, "The researchers suggest [the powder] ultimately might be used [as a high-fat, high-protein food] for humans." Enjoy your meal!

When Less Is More

It used to be that Soviet military power would bloom with the cherry blossoms along the Potomac—which just happened to coincide with the budget season. But congressional sessions have been getting longer, and it seems as though nowadays we spend the whole fiscal year being scared silly. Not to mention being picked clean.

But the Pentagon has a less frightening way of shaking the money tree. It just takes a little cooperation from the press—as in a dispatch to *The New York Times* that began: "President Carter, in a decision that distresses the military, has approved a defense budget of $126 billion for the next fiscal year. The figure is about $4 billion lower than that sought by Defense Secretary Harold Brown."

A little arithmetic reveals that the figure is also $9.2 billion *higher* than that of the current budget and so marks the second increase in a row from a President who, as candidate, promised to cut military spending. Distressed? The military must be crying all the way to the bang.

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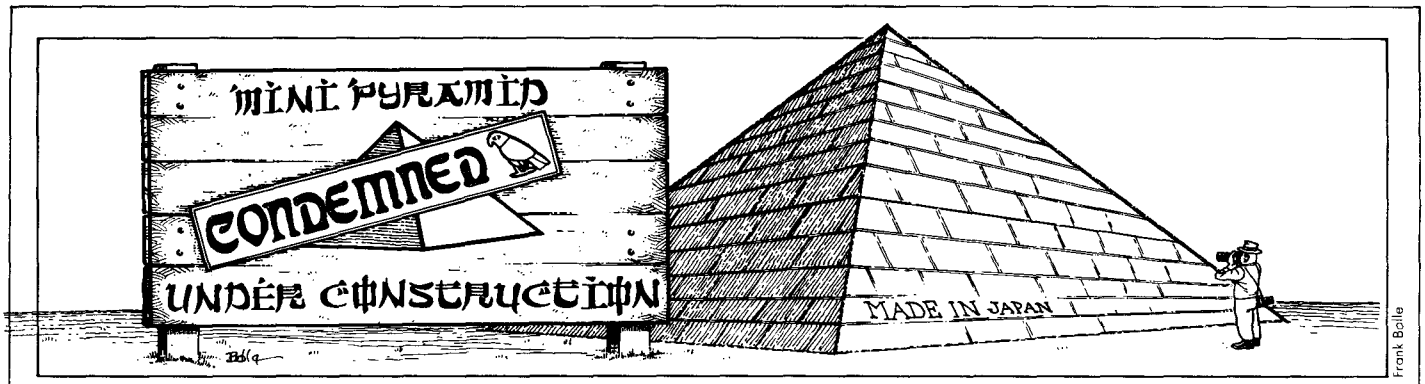
Front Runners



Instant History

Japan's tireless entrepreneurs are now busy erecting an authentic pyramid not far from Cairo. The new pyramid will be a midget among monsters—only one seventh the size of the nearby 4,500-year-old Great Pyramid of Cheops. But in every other detail the mini-pyramid will closely resemble the real thing—right down to the use by the 10,000-man construction crew of primitive building techniques employed five millennia ago.

Nippon TV and Waseda University, the project's cosponsors, say they are building the structure to test, among other things, the claim that ancient pyramid builders knew the earth's dimensions, understood the movements of the planets, and designed the kings' triangular burial monuments accordingly. When the pyramid is completed this month or in May, it will be torn down immediately by decree of the Egyptian government, which frowns on attractions that divert attention from the Great Pyramid itself. Fortunately, Nippon TV will keep a filmed record of the project's various building stages.

No one has yet said whether the builders' zeal for authenticity will extend to following the ancient Egyptian practice of killing a pyramid's architects and entombing them within the structure—so that their knowledge of passageways leading into the king's burial chamber would die with them.

Bad Show on Fleet Street

Britain's city desk editors now have official proof of what they've suspected all along—that British schools aren't teaching students the queen's English. Recently, a journalism council tested 572 eighteen-year-old would-be journalists to check on their command of the language. Only one in six passed the test. When asked to use the word "diffident" in a sentence, one hopeful came up with, "Mr. Marx, the leading Soviet diffident, was arrested today." Another produced this sparkler: "The shareholders are angry that the diffident is so low."

The journalism council's members reacted angrily to the test results. Snapped Gordon Farnsworth, a newspaper editor, "A journalist who cannot understand words is like a bricklayer who cannot mix cement....It looks as if we may have to do the job of the schools, [teaching] remedial English in the [journalism] council's full-time courses."

Ordeal in Triplicate

The ancient art of police interrogation was given a new twist recently when the police of Radnor, Pennsylvania, turned an ordinary office copying machine into a "lie detector."

Before grilling a suspect, the Radnor police hooked him up to wires connected with a Xerox machine—which they told the prisoner was a lie detector. What the police didn't explain to the suspect was that they had earlier placed in the machine's innards a card bearing these words: *He's lying*. Whenever the interrogators felt the suspect's answers didn't ring true during the questioning, they would punch a button, and the machine would spit out a copy of the "He's lying" card. Unnerved, the prisoner finally confessed.

Judge Ira Garb later dismissed the case, however, saying with a laugh, "It's the kind of comic relief we need around here once in a while." Any civil libertarians present in the courtroom presumably failed to appreciate the humor of it all.

Weighty Prose

The Long Island, N.Y., home of seventy-year-old Eleanor Barry was piled high with books, newspapers, and other bearers of the printed word. They were her friends, but recently, in a cruel, black-humor twist, they done her in: A massive pile of print toppled onto Barry as she lay in bed. Police eventually dug her out, but she died of her injuries at the local hospital.

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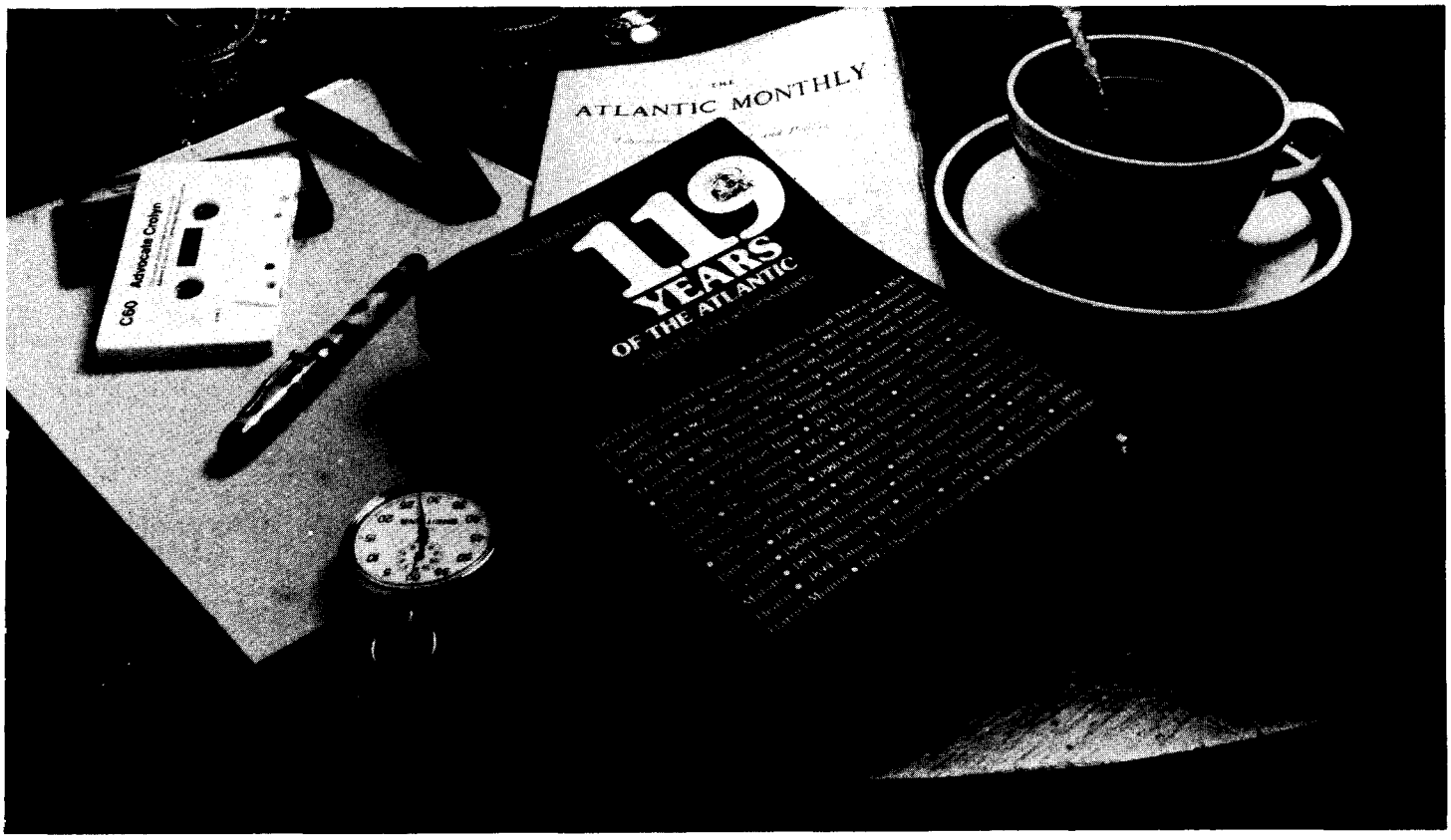

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Many pieces, such as Ernest Hemingway's "Two Tales of Darkness," are reprinted here for the first time.

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CITIVIEWS

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The Public Interest

"It was a terrible week. First we found our Automobile Club infested with pedestrians...then we discovered six experts who'd infiltrated the Laymen's Association...and Friday we caught three people in the Public Interest Forum secretly pursuing their own special interests...."

No one is known to have actually reported such a week, but it should come as no surprise if someone eventually does. Certainly, it is the sort of thing against which many of the voices raised "in defense of the public interest" seem to be warning us.

Probably no phrase in the English language affords more ambiguity or opportunities for demagoguery than "the public interest." Aside from the obvious question of who has the right to speak "for" the public, there is the still larger problem of just whose interest is being protected, and from whom.

What, exactly, is The Public? Who belongs to it, or, conversely, who does not? If The Public includes everyone, then the individual who volunteers to "defend the public interest" is really offering to protect us from ourselves. If The Public does not include everyone, then who has been excluded, and on what authority?

Or perhaps instead of one great Public we are referring to many smaller ones: as in the traveling public, the investing public, the theater-going public, or the Nielsen public. After all, people do form themselves into groups based on a community of interest, and those interests will sometimes conflict with one another. In that event, perhaps, the public interest advocate fills the role of impartial arbiter, dispensing justice or at least wisdom from some neutral vantage point, free of the special interests that entangle everyone else. But sometimes that neutral territory is hard to locate, and its disinterested inhabitants hard to identify.

Anyone trying to cross a busy intersection on foot, for example, knows that pedestrians and motorists sometimes have conflicting interests. So does the motorist trying to turn the corner. If there is a debate tonight in City Hall about altering the traffic lights for the greater convenience of one group or the other, whose side will you be on? And regardless of what you believe at the moment, how do we know you can be trusted? You might start out as a motorist, find a parking space on the way downtown, and arrive as a pedestrian. Yet, does it follow that we can find a fair solution to the problem only with the help of someone with no commitment to either side; that is to say, somebody who neither drives nor walks?

The purpose of this line of reasoning is not to denigrate anyone's efforts to speak disinterestedly on behalf of the general welfare, but merely to invite attention to certain aspects of the *pro bono publico* dialogue that are too often overlooked.

Consider, for example, the question of consumer advocacy. While there may be some uncertainty about just who or what constitutes a public, there is no doubt whatever that we are all consumers. Since no meeting can be held in which everyone present is not equally a

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consumer, who then does the "consumer representative" actually represent? Clearly, it must be either (1) a specific group of people who have in some manner selected a delegate to convey *their* convictions to the meeting; or (2) the speaker's own point of view.

In the latter case, the "consumer advocate" (at a stockholders' meeting, for instance) should really be saying something like this:

"I realize that everyone here is as much a consumer as I am. But you have other interests that may be more important to you than your interests as consumers. Since I am free of such conflicts, or able to deal with them more objectively, I am here to serve as the authoritative spokesman on that subject."

This is not, of course, the way such representations are usually made.

If, on the other hand, the advocate appears as the representative of a formal, organized group, the problem of objectivity becomes even more troublesome. Any organized group of people constitutes a special interest—by definition. Moreover, the longer an organization exists, the more specialized its interests become. It is unnecessary to demonstrate this fact: it is immediately apparent to anyone with even a passing acquaintance with any group, even if only a bridge club. Nor is objectivity—or the lack of it—linked solely to the profit motive, as any philanthropist can testify who has tried to honor competing claims by representatives of equally worthwhile charities.

Over the past decade, there has come into existence something often referred to as "the public interest community." It consists of men and women with a common desire to emphasize certain values and social perspectives—e.g., a clean environment—that affect all of us alike, and to act on behalf of those values whenever and wherever they perceive the rest of us to be neglecting them. It does nothing to detract from anyone's efforts to suggest that even the noblest cause can at length become a vested interest, or that it may attract at least a few who are perhaps more interested in doing well than in doing good.

Every American is entitled by law and the Constitution to fair representation by a president and a vice-president, two senators and a congressman, not to mention a governor, a state legislator, and probably a mayor. The vigor of our two-party system and the frequency with which we return our officials to private life testify that these legal representatives sometimes leave many of us less than satisfied. Anyone stepping forward to supplement their efforts by reminding us that something that ought to be done is not being done, or vice versa, should always be welcome in the national meeting hall.

It is only prudent, however, to review occasionally what used to be called in the Old West their *bona fides*. And it seems only fair to recall, from time to time, Dr. Johnson's admonition that "a common prejudice should not be found in one whose trade it is to rectify error."

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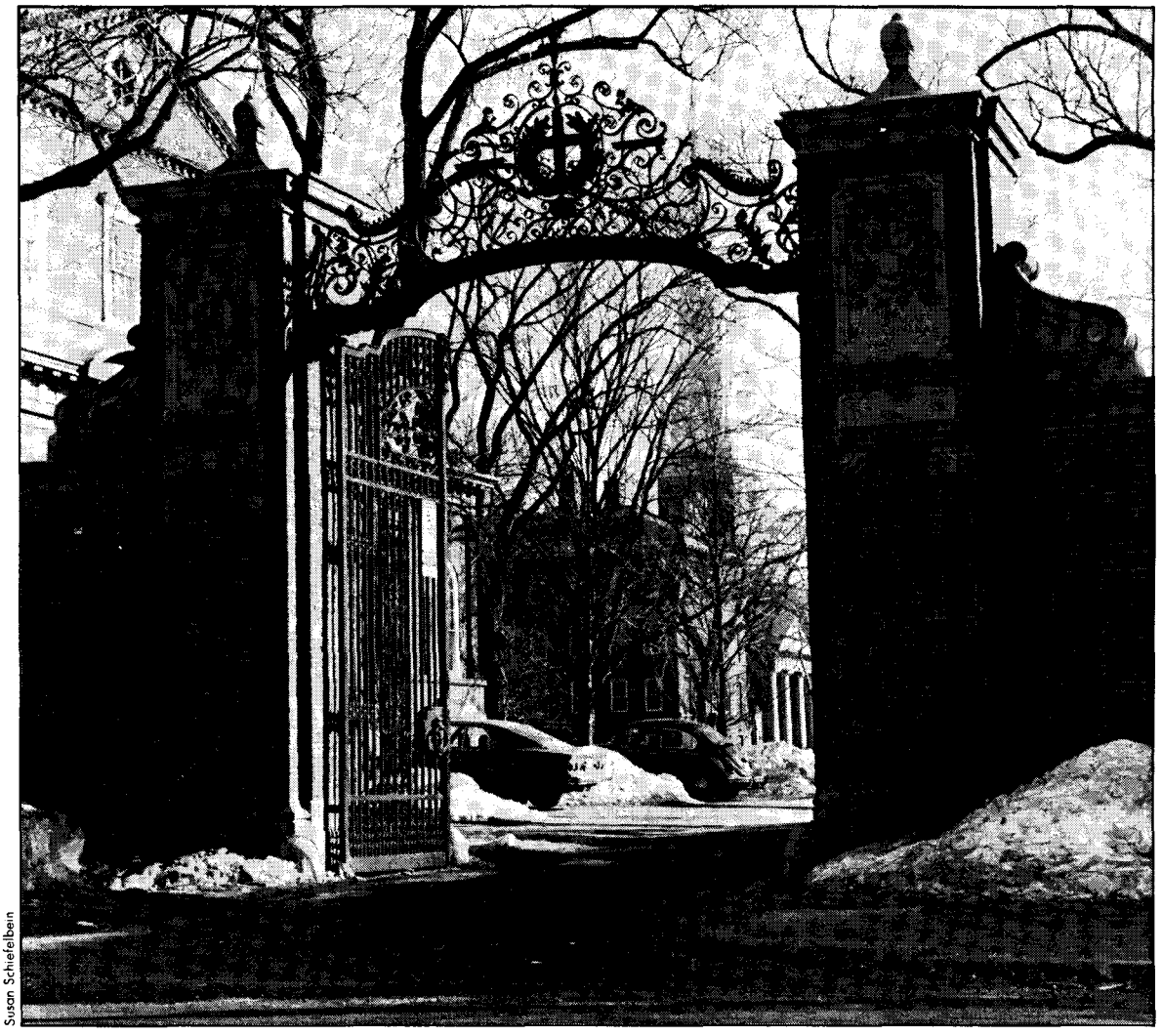
CONFUSION AT HARVARD
What Makes An "Educated Man"?



Susan Schiefelbein

by Susan Schiefelbein

Cambridge, Massachusetts
June 1978

SPRING IS RIPENING into summer, and classes are over at last. Today Harvard Yard is a sea of mortarboards and billowing robes. John Doe has completed the requirements for a Bachelor of Arts degree; soon he will reach for a diploma stamped with the seal of one of the most prestigious educational institutions in the world.

John has never read any of Shakespeare's plays. He is wholly unfamiliar with the works of Plato and Aristotle. Some of his classmates have taken no mathematics courses at Harvard, nor have they passed any exam to show proficiency therein. Others have not studied biology or chemistry or physics or astronomy. They know virtually nothing about religion. Among their friends are students who have yet to crack a textbook on philosophy, economics, art, or music.

The commencement exercises have begun, and the president of Harvard intones the traditional proclamation: "Welcome to the company of educated men and women."

A QUIET REVOLUTION is taking place in Harvard Yard. With little fanfare but with great determination, the college is attempting to restore order to the near anarchy that has prevailed in its undergraduate program. The battle sounds are muted, for faculty members are overwhelmingly agreed upon the need for reform. But the absence of academic upheaval is no indication of the far-reaching significance of what may be impending; if the Harvard reforms are successful, they will exert a powerful influence on higher education for the balance of the century—helping to strengthen vague course require-

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Laura Levine

Henry Rosovsky, dean of the faculty of arts and sciences: "Welcoming our graduates to the company of educated men and women makes sense only if it expresses our belief that their mental skills have met a reasonable standard."

ments that now characterize undergraduate programs.

The reform effort is not merely an attempt to weed out worthless courses—which, as many professors say disdainfully, are "not a Harvard problem." Nor does it reflect a pendulum-swing back to the rigidly prescribed course schedules of an earlier era. The movement is instead an effort to restore to the university some of the responsibility in the design of a student's education.

The orchestrator of these efforts is Henry Rosovsky, Harvard's dean of the faculty of arts and sciences. When Rosovsky was assigned to his post in 1973—he was at the time chairman of the department of economics—President Derek Bok gave him the specific mandate of reappraising undergraduate education. Rosovsky first focused his attentions on the budget, bringing it quickly into balance. Then in 1974 he set out to tackle the even more complicated issue of curricular reform.

This spring, after four years of preparing a reform proposal, Rosovsky embarks on the final and most critical step in his redefinition of undergraduate education: He submits the proposal to the faculty at large. How they receive his proposal will do much to determine the course of education at Harvard. If they riddle it with amendments, the plan could degenerate into nothing more than the potpourri curriculum that the university has at present. If, on the other hand, they accept his proposal uncritically and implement it uncreatively, any coherence they give to the curriculum will be gained only at the expense of the imaginative courses that now give Harvard its singular luster. But if they can walk the tightrope between these two extremes, they will give Harvard College some assurance that future graduates will be more soundly educated than the class of '78.

The problem Harvard reformers must address is the tendency in Cambridge and across the nation to see education as a vast smorgasbord, where a student's tastes alone determine whether he or she will receive proper educational nutrition. At Harvard, that smorgasbord is called the General Education program, a rich profusion of interesting courses, some of which are fundamental while others are esoteric and inessential.

"Gen Ed" requires that students complete a writing course and some 10 other courses distributed evenly among the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Not only are these areas broadly, almost vaguely, defined but students must cull their 10 supposedly fundamental courses from some 2,600 unintegrated titles offered in the Harvard catalog.

"More students are bewildered than stimulated by this cornucopia," according to a report issued by one of Rosovsky's committees. Most faculty members agree. The multiplicity of courses has inspired them to describe the situation as "an embarrassment of riches" and "an agony of choice," and the Gen Ed program itself as "drifting aimlessly in a strange sea with neither a map nor a compass to guide it." The catalog, according to Rosovsky, "soon may resemble the Manhattan telephone directory. Despite its weight, does it convey the right kind of information?"

The information Rosovsky finds so sadly lacking in the catalog has to do with the need to identify which courses are most important. Obviously, not all 2,600 courses are equally valuable to a person struggling to build an educational base. The requirement sets no priorities, ensures no minimum standard of education, provides no "core" of knowledge to be shared by all Harvard graduates. A student, for example, can fill his humanities requirement by taking courses like "the aesthetics of film comedy" and "the civilization of continental and island Portugal" and never come near a literature course. "Interplanetary and intercontinental cultural diffusion and contact" counts as much toward the natural sciences requirement as do courses in biology and chemistry. "As any student uninterested in science will gleefully testify," a Harvard committee reported, "the natural sciences requirement can be met in any number of ways which will ensure that the student will not learn, or even observe from a safe distance, science." In short, the college has been turning out students with B.A.s that say less and less about what the students have learned. "A bachelor's degree may signify little more than the satisfac-

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Harvard Crimson

When the faculty balked at the details of the first curriculum proposal, history professor Bernard Bailyn stepped in with a plan that was more broadly defined, thus preventing the reform from being voted down in toto.

tory completion of a fixed number of undergraduate courses," Rosovsky has written. "Welcoming our graduate to the company of educated men and women makes sense to me only if it expresses our beliefs that their mental skills and powers have met a reasonable standard."

It was this discomfort with the curriculum that prompted Rosovsky to get a reform movement rolling. He wrote a letter to the faculty in which he discussed the problem of what he called a "laissez-faire curricular policy" and voiced his fear that a Harvard degree was uncomfortably close to becoming nothing more than a "certificate of attendance." At that time, he assigned seven task forces to study various aspects of college life, including curricular reform, teaching, housing, and resources. Faculty interest quickly focused on the curriculum committee, chaired by James Q. Wilson, a professor of government. One reason for the interest was that similar reforms had just been effectively squelched at Yale and at Princeton. A more compelling reason was that Rosovsky and Wilson were spotlighting a problem from which the professors had too long averted their eyes: Harvard's curricular design, which has changed little during the past 30 years, no longer fits a body of knowledge that has changed enormously. The Gen Ed program has become an educational dinosaur.

The Wilson report, presented to faculty members in early 1977, attempted to solve the problem by increasing Gen Ed's three broad areas of study to eight more specific ones. But the faculty balked at the areas he had specified. To prevent them from voting down the reform movement in toto, history professor Bernard Bailyn narrowed Wilson's eight areas to five more general ones, and the faculty voted to send Bailyn's proposal back to committee to be fully developed.

In the intervening years, most members of the Harvard community knew only the purpose, not the particulars, of the plan that was being prepared. A resolute and careful man, Rosovsky knew the intricacies of pushing reform through bureaucracy. Along with Bailyn and Wilson, he privately contacted students and some 100 professors, gathering suggestions and effecting compromises behind closed doors.

THE ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY the elements of good education and to find a mechanism for putting them to work is not new to Harvard. Indeed, its reforms historically have had such impact on education that other universities have sometimes practiced them with more vigor than was ever applied in Cambridge. The first of Harvard's reforms came in 1872, when President Charles Eliot broke with prescriptive tradition. He introduced the modified elective system in the belief that "there is no uniform boy." By the early 1900s, Eliot's elective system had lost its starch; students were undirected, and their courses had become insubstantial. President A. Lawrence Lowell sought to revitalize the program by introducing the "concentration"—most schools now call it a major—which required that in addition to electives, students study a single subject in depth.

The curriculum changed again in 1945, when President James Bryant Conant issued his landmark *General Education in a Free Society*. Commonly called the Redbook, Conant's plan eventually served as the scaffolding for today's Gen Ed requirements. The Redbook was an effort to tailor education to the needs of a postwar world. Western heritage—the heritage that had nurtured modern education and preserved the right to free inquiry—was sacrosanct to Conant, and out of his reverence for it grew his philosophy of general education. His aim was to provide students with "an appreciation of the responsibilities and the benefits which come to them because they are Americans and are free" by giving them "a common core of knowledge" of what they shared "as citizens and heirs of a joint culture."

Conant's intention was to require that a student study, in addition to his concentration, a few subjects chosen from a limited list of basic courses designed specifically for students outside their majors. But the Redbook plan, while enthusiastically implemented at schools throughout the nation, was never adopted in full at Harvard. Faculty members, averse to its rigid requirements, voted to accept it "in principle and program" only—and it began to dissipate almost imme-

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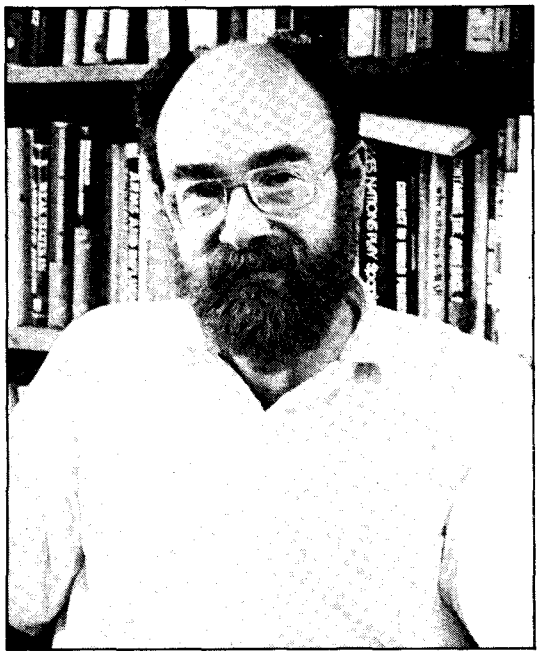

Mark Lennihan

Asked how soon he thought curricular reform would be implemented, government professor Stanley Hoffmann replied, "A Harvard professor is like a sovereign state. Both take a long time to overcome."

liately. Courses that departments didn't want—either because they were too esoteric or commanded too low a budget priority—were palmed off on the Gen Ed department, which has a budget of its own. (This semester, one professor introduced his course with the comment, "This is not a Gen Ed course; this is a chemistry course financed by General Education." As one of his students remarked, "The fraud goes on.")

The Sixties may have only intensified the process that was already under way. "It was a time to loosen up," says Bailyn, "a time when people questioned the educational paternalism that lies at the bottom of any coherent educational program."

The activist student of the Sixties has been replaced now by the preprofessional of the Seventies—fully 80 percent of Harvard's entering freshmen this year are in premed or prelaw programs. Many of them see the freedom won by the previous generation as nothing but indirection, and they yearn for a little structure in their curriculum. "Harvard has gone soft," one student wrote to the Wilson committee. "Increasing numbers of alternatives exist to meet requirements, and minimal competence is required to fill them. In designing a course of study, the [student's] concern shifts from achieving growth to finding an easy A." Or, as another student remarked, "You can get through with strategy rather than work."

Many professors, however, say that the problem is not one of easy classwork but of piecemeal education. They contend that the proliferation of classes did not increase the student's chances of getting a flimsy course so much as it decreased the chances that a student would see how the various parts of his education fit together; the courses are imaginatively conceived, they say, but miserably integrated. "Gen Ed courses are good," says government professor Stanley Hoffmann. "The problem is that they have no rationale behind them. The program suffers from middle-aged spread; there is no criterion for inclusion and no principle for exclusion. The need now is not for a broader education, but for one that is less fragmented." Samuel Beer, a government professor whose own spirited Gen Ed course is in great student demand, agrees. "Gen Ed has some damned good courses," Beer says, "but it's a miscellany of damned good courses, and that's the real danger. When you have a bunch of itty-bitty courses, there comes the threat of what Whitehead termed 'the damnable curse of inert ideas' —a single semester in economics, for example, is not enough; the facts are simply transferred from teacher to student, and they never come alive."

Whitehead's curse and Beer's lamentation might well be avoided by implementing the educational theories that Harvard professors are now pondering. Most of these theories are connected to three main educative tasks: identifying the essentials of a basic education—or, as Hoffmann puts it, "the important legacies for a citizen of the world, the knowledge of the past that illuminates the present"; ensuring that those fundamentals range across a broad spectrum of fields; and conveying knowledge not by rattling off isolated facts but by helping the student understand the modes of thought employed by each discipline.

A broad spectrum of studies is the one component of the triad that Harvard students already have; unfortunately, they do not necessarily know how to make the best of it. David Riesman, Harvard professor emeritus and author of the celebrated study *The Lonely Crowd*, is particularly concerned that students choose the kind of course selection that could enrich their vision of the world in which they will live after venturing from the ivory tower. "If students develop a familiarity with dramatically different cultures," Riesman says, "they will develop a leverage on America as well. A student is impoverished, moreover, without a knowledge of demography—the middle-class population, for example, is not reproducing itself, but the poor are more than doing so. What will this mean? What does it mean to live in a man-made, technological world? What can religion mean for the student? Students should make an effort to understand religion, if not adopt it, to cope with the vicissitudes of faith in preparation for those times when life will leave them stranded."

Such studies, if they are seen in the context of their vital connections, would do much to energize education. Says Beer, "When a student has approached his concentration

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Mary B. Ridge

Social sciences professor David Riesman: "We live in the secular cathedrals of higher learning in the absence of the convictions that built the cathedrals."

from different angles—when he begins to think—that's the liberating influence; that's when he becomes free." Pascal's adage, then—that it is better to know something about everything than to know everything about one thing—might well be edited in light of modern needs. Knowing something about everything can lend spirit and meaning to the rigorous study of a single subject.

Teaching "methods of thought" rather than isolated facts gives added dimension to this interplay of course study. For example, Riesman says, "Mathematicians tend to be Catonists; scientists, Platonists. Students should learn that they work in different ways. People are presently teaching science more in the sense of 'doing science' than in giving students an understanding of what science is all about. Science is not made up of cookbook formulas, but of guessing and hypothesizing. When a student understands the thought processes, he understands that science is more an art than science as we traditionally have defined it."

CHOOSING THE ACTUAL COURSES for a "core curriculum"—as Rosovsky's plan has come to be called—may seem the easiest and most obvious task in the process of mapping out a new educational course, but it is in fact the most precarious. People who agree on principles often cannot agree on particulars.

The curriculum that Rosovsky and his advisers have proposed is, at this writing, being discussed by the full faculty and therefore is subject to change. One requirement it recommends, however, is unlikely to cause discord: a course in expository writing. At present, not all students—even at Harvard—can write clearly. The core would retain the presently required writing course, with the additional requirement that students do their writing assignments on another subject they take during the same semester.

Other particulars in the core include a requirement that students take one course in literature; one in either fine arts or music; two in "social and philosophical analysis"; one in both science and mathematics (or pass a proficiency exam in math); two in history; and one in "foreign language and culture."

Perhaps the most progressive elements of the core are the art, music, and foreign culture proposals. Until now, according to Riesman, the arts have been given short shrift: "This is a verbal culture that puts a premium on the highly articulate. Our oral acuity is keen, but our visual acuity is dim. Students should be more aware of their spatial environment." The foreign language and culture proposal has already been criticized by some as being too weak-kneed; we are a society, they contend, of half-educated people, literate in only the Western half of human heritage. They would have liked to see the requirement ensure that students develop some understanding of non-Western culture.

But Edwin Reischauer, Harvard professor and former United States ambassador to Japan, disagrees. Reischauer, who has argued vociferously for holistic education, insists that the proposal is in fact a step in the right direction. According to the plan, a student must study a foreign culture, and the less foreign the culture, the more complex the study. For example, a course on France—a culture relatively familiar to most students—might be taught in translation, whereas a course on some aspect of Japanese life would not. "If the faculty passes the proposal, Harvard will be the first major university to establish such a requirement," Reischauer says.

How soon the curriculum recommendations will pass, however, is a matter of speculation: Harvard traditionalists do not jump into change any more readily than they did a century ago, when Eliot declared, "The inertia of a massive university is formidable. A good past is positively dangerous if it makes us content with the present and so unprepared for the future." Hoffmann has updated the observation: "A Harvard professor is like a sovereign state. They both take a long time to overcome." The fact that Yale and Princeton voted down similar reforms causes further anxiety among core proponents.

Rosovky and his colleagues stand on firmer ground, thanks

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to the careful preparation they have made in the corridors of academe. Reforms have failed at other schools, Rosovsky contends, "because they came from blue-ribbon juries on high and were then handed down to the faculties. Our faculty has had a bigger role in this; many of them have been directly involved." One professor surmises that Rosovsky garnered an extra margin of votes in another way: by declining a recent invitation to become president of Yale. "Henry accumulated capital and a great deal of respect by not going to Yale," the professor remarked. "We owe him something now."

Even if the faculty accepts the principle of the core, its future will still hang on how they deal with its particulars. "There is nothing so murderous as a stream of amenders," comments one administrator. Should such amendments materialize, reformers fear, they will come from departmental jingoists protecting their turf.

Whatever Happened to Mr. Chips?

WHILE HARVARD PROFESSORS are preoccupied with philosophies about the quality of education, students are interested in a much more immediate concern—the quality of their teachers. "To say we wouldn't fight in the cafeterias over a new curriculum is an understatement," one student remarked recently. "Ask the students what matters to them, and they'll say 'better teachers.'"

The root of the problem, according to students, is that they don't have enough contact with their professors—not for the tuition they pay ($7,000 a semester) and particularly not for the expectations they were given by Harvard promotional brochures, which declare that "a freshman may well be taught by a Nobel prizewinner or a world-famous professor."

"The brochures give you the idea you'll be having lunch with Moynihan," a sophomore government major recently complained. "Not many students actually expect to exchange theories with a professor over sherry, but many of us do come to Harvard because we've heard so much about the faculty. In the end, if you're able to land a course with a famous professor, it will be in a lecture hall filled with six hundred students. You might as well watch him on TV."

What makes students even more bitter is that most small courses aren't even taught by a full professor, famous or not. Students are often taught by other students—graduate teaching assistants or teaching fellows awarded the job not because of their teaching ability but because of their financial need. "You don't exactly fall over a full professor," remarked a *Crimson* reporter. "I don't think I've spoken to one all year." His comment is not surprising. Despite the fact that Harvard legislation requires that 70 percent of all tutorials (small classes) be taught by faculty members, the rule is treated as nothing more than a flimsy guideline. In the history department, for example, only 9 percent of the tutorials are taught by faculty. When students protested such flagrant disregard for the rules, faculty members suggested that the situation be remedied not by enforcing the regulation more strictly but by doing away with it altogether.

Some of the student complaints are related to problems that are unavoidable at a large research institution; celebrated professors, after all, would soon lose their celebrity if they spent all their time teaching and none keeping up in their field. The students, however, fully recognize that research puts a mighty claim on a professor's time. What they resent is that at Harvard, research is often given exclusive importance. Even faculty members admit that an excellent teacher who gives more time to his students than to his research hasn't a ghost of a chance for promotion; but tenure has frequently been given to a candidate who has submitted dazzling research but is incomprehensible in the classroom.

The administration has not been wholly indifferent to the problem. Dean Henry Rosovsky recently required that all tenure nominations be accompanied by an assessment of the candidate's teaching ability. Rosovsky also established the Committee on Pedagogical Improvement, which has reviewed student charges in detail and has already issued a report. Finally, President Derek Bok has announced that he intends to seek funds to maintain the Harvard-Danforth Center for Teaching and Learning, a facility that offers seminars on teaching methods and equipment that professors can use to videotape their lectures for critique.

Many of the students, however, wonder whether such efforts will be effective in improving the quality of teachers at Harvard. They say that Rosovsky's promise to take teaching into consideration in tenure decisions does not necessarily guarantee that good teachers will be promoted. The report of the Committee on Pedagogical Improvement, Rosovsky himself says, is "nothing revolutionary"; one student dubbed it a "collection of platitudes." And as for the much-touted Danforth Center, students say that a full professor wouldn't be caught dead on its premises. "The faculty is trying to build an image for the center as a resource that is useful for good teachers as well as for bad ones," one student remarked. "But it still has the reputation of being meant for professors who couldn't teach the alphabet."

Students, meanwhile, are making their own attempts to improve the situation. They presently publish a guide that evaluates professors—an effort, one student said, to introduce an "embarrassment factor." Students also recently suggested that the school give an award for outstanding teaching ability to one professor each year. The award, however, met its fate shortly after the proposal was made. The faculty council voted it down—a result, one professor remarked, "of my colleagues' appalling unwillingness to be assessed."

—SUSAN SCHIEFELBEIN

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Such infighting could reduce the proposal to nothing more than the hodgepodge curriculum that Harvard has at present. Some say the logrolling has begun already; they point to Bailyn's involvement as a core architect to explain why two full semesters of history are required in the proposal while no other department is even specifically named in the prospectus.

To the students, however, the curriculum requirements and the faculty politicking matter little. "If the courses are good, I don't care whether there are five areas, eight areas, or twenty," says one Harvard woman. "I wonder how much of Rosovsky's 'reform' is for the sake of reputation and fund raising and how much for our own good," says another student. "I'm afraid a lot of it is superficial bureaucratic change, a collection of paper that will just be stored on a shelf. They expect new courses to come from the same people who taught

Retreat from Anarchy

by Fred M. Hechinger

WHEN NO LESS A FIGURE than Harvard's dean Henry Rosovsky says bluntly, "At Harvard, there has been no formal review of undergraduate education since 1945," it is clear that general education, the heart and soul of undergraduate education, is in trouble—not only at this college but throughout the country. Harvard, the nation's first university, is, after all, higher education's weather vane.

If Harvard is again taking a critical look at itself today, it is safe to predict that the results will once again send their shock waves to campuses across the country. What appears somewhat different this time around in the continuing reform cycle is that the dissatisfactions that occupy Harvard's faculty and that have led to the issuance of high-level resolutions have already found eloquent expression in student and faculty committees from coast to coast.

The cause of the discontent is not difficult to identify. In the name of greater freedom for students to pursue "relevant" courses, the youth revolution of the Sixties swept away most of the old academic requirements, giving undergraduates virtually unlimited choice as to how they might piece their education together. Many of the requirements that fell victim to the revolt had indeed been shopworn, dull, and intellectually threadbare, and they deserved to go.

Unfortunately, panicky faculty members everywhere hoisted the white flag of surrender without trying to shape new academic goals to replace the abandoned ones. While the students celebrated their famous victory, the faculty heaved a sigh of relief and went back to its own concerns. Now, less than 10 years later, students are beginning to sense that it was not they, but the *senior faculty* that was liberated.

That is why United States commissioner of education Ernest Boyer describes the "system" born of the Sixties revolt as one in which "a humanities requirement may be met by a course in film appreciation (12 nights of the Marx brothers and the aesthetics of *Casablanca*) ... modern dance, or poetry reading. A social science requirement can be met by [taking] a course in Latin American history, by watching *The Adams Chronicles* on television, or by making a tape recording of grandma flipping through the family photo album. A curriculum that suggests students have nothing in common is just as flawed as one that suggests students are all alike."

And so on campuses across the country, the search is on for ways to shape a curriculum out of do-it-yourself chaos; for ways to respond to the charge—recently made by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching—that general education is a "disaster area"; for ways to put an end to what Dean Rosovsky calls the "incoherence" of undergraduate education.

New groups of reformers are trying hard to answer a very tough question: Which subjects are so important that their study ought to touch the lives and minds of all students—humanists as well as scientists, future teachers as well as engineers, academic researchers as well as businessmen, lawyers, and doctors?

Here are some examples of incipient efforts, cited merely to indicate the widespread nature of the new search for reform:

- At Amherst, a faculty committee is deliberating the return to some type of course distribution requirement. Although the college had gained national attention in the late 1940s with a pioneering core course in the problems in American civilization, in which all departments and all undergraduates took part, Amherst, too, dropped all course requirements during the stormy Sixties. Amherst's president John Ward, in urging a reappraisal of its actions, expressed his concern about an approach that says, in effect: "Here in any term are 206 courses—all excellent, of course. Take any four."
- At Middlebury College, the reform movement required this year, for the first time, that students take at least one "foundation" course from three of four academic divisions during their first two years.
- At Cornell, a committee on general education called for a greater number of interdisciplinary courses and for increased attention to general education.
- At Stanford, seven separate task forces are trying to determine "what is fundamental to undergraduate education." The discussion centers on a proposal to introduce a university-wide course on Western culture.
- At Johns Hopkins, president Steven Muller recently urged a return to general education because, he said, "We're turning out highly technical and highly skilled people who are literally barbarians."

But while there is widespread agreement that undergraduate education is in a state of crisis, there is far less consensus about the action necessary to rebuild the crumbled structure. No less concerned than are his colleagues about the present state of affairs, Theodore Lockwood, president of Trinity College, in Hartford, Connecticut, nevertheless warns that simply going back to the way things used to be—trotting out such old phrases as "foundation courses," "core curriculum," and "distribution requirements"—will not do the trick. He suggests the deeper malaise is that faculty members don't know their own fundamental beliefs about general education;

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the old ones and couldn't come up with anything new." "If I were a student," says Hoffmann, "I'd be cynical also. It's hard to ask a professor who has been teaching for thirty years to start afresh. But how good the curriculum will be, if it is passed, depends on our ability to concoct new courses—or whether we simply give new labels to old courses. The core itself does emphasize the need to avoid using old courses."

This is not to say that the indiscriminate abandonment of old courses in the name of reform is one of Harvard's goals. That the curriculum might achieve coherence at the expense of creativity, in fact, has been Riesman's "great fear."

Riesman, who has participated from the beginning in the Gen Ed program, spoke recently about these apprehensions at his home in Cambridge. An elderly man with straight gray hair that hangs just below his ears, he was wearing a suit even though it was a Saturday morning. His study was heated by a

that academic departments lack a sense of broader purpose.

Students are equally divided. One student leader at Stanford responded with something resembling anger to the idea of a Western culture course. "We think it's a terrible idea," he said. "Western culture is racist and sexist, and there are too many requirements already."

But within days after these opinions were expressed, Pat Flinn, a senior majoring in psychology at Stanford, wrote an article in the Stanford Daily in fervent support of the Western culture requirement. Opposing a faculty substitute proposal for a "multitrack model" under which students would be required to take certain existing courses, Flinn charged that the faculty still prefers to stick with the present fragmented approach rather than face the inconvenience of having to design a new, sweeping, and cohesive course in which many teachers would have to explore uncharted ground together with their students. (This was precisely what made the 1940s Amherst experiment with the course in problems in American civilization such a huge success—until changing times and perhaps ultimate boredom with what was no longer new and daring sent the program into decline and oblivion.)

At Berkeley, Mark Courtney, the student government's academic affairs vice-president, complained recently that there was no faculty support for broad interdisciplinary programs. Admitting that "a lot of students don't like it," he pleaded the cause of a core curriculum: "There should be some courses that would integrate areas of knowledge, and all students should take them.

"This is predominantly a research institution," Courtney said, in terms reminiscent of criticisms underlying the present reappraisal at Harvard. "There is no incentive for faculty to have individual contact with undergraduates. In fact, there is a disincentive [in terms of promotion and prestige], and many have not had any experience in dealing with students."

WHAT THEN is likely to happen, beyond momentary hand wringing and the production of voluminous committee reports?

It seems likely that nothing in the nature of serious reforms can emerge before academic leaders—men and women with the minds and the devotion to look beyond their special areas and research—arrive at a consensus concerning some essential components of general education for a free society in the last quarter of the twentieth century. It has become fashionable among intellectuals to bemoan the complexity of the modern world and to proclaim that it is no longer possible to agree on any common denominator.

Such a defeatist view, however, seems to many as unproductive as the Stanford student leader's assertion that because Western culture is racist and sexist, it is not worth studying. It is precisely because modern society is complex that proponents of general education feel it needs to redouble its efforts to create for young men and women a common foundation that allows them to communicate with each other as they deal with the complexities. But what of the charge that Western culture contains, in addition to its triumphs, a legacy of racism and sexism, among other sins? One rejoinder to this charge might be, what other cultures *are* all virtue and purity? A second rejoinder might be that Western culture should, ideally, be studied by all American college graduates not to the exclusion of other cultures but as an essential home base from which to seek a better understanding of the rest of the world and the universe.

A few years ago, one might have adjudged such reform goals naïve and unattainable. Academic departments are, after all, deeply committed to their own turf; faculty members, knowing where the power lies, are not likely to defy the prevailing structure by shifting their attention to the creation and teaching of interdepartmental courses that promise little departmental glory and few raves from scholarly journals.

Yet today, many see hope because of the stands taken by the Rosovskys and their counterparts on the other side of the continent—for instance, at Stanford. What only recently seemed wishful thinking may soon become the pragmatic view. Graduate enrollments are declining, and as the market for Ph.D.s continues to shrink, enrollments will probably decline even more. If this happens, it will become less profitable for departments to pay disproportionate attention to graduate education, while neglecting undergraduates.

True, there will also be fewer undergraduates. But since colleges—even the most prestigious ones—must worry about attracting students, neglect of undergraduates could readily be institutional suicide.

This is not to suggest that universities need not uphold high standards of graduate scholarship and research; such an extreme swing of the pendulum not only would be disastrous for the nation but would also inevitably hurt the quality of undergraduate instruction even further. Teaching and research will always remain interdependent; but in the past three decades, the balance between the two has been seriously disturbed, and the need now is to restore that balance. The best teachers must once again give priority to sharing with their students not only the excitement of academic disciplines but the confidence-building search for a broader synthesis.

The obstacles remain formidable. Even a minimal consensus of what makes a modern educated man or woman is hard to achieve; preprofessionalism-run-riot impels the brightest undergraduates to rush headlong toward "success" without paying attention to people or ideals. Training at American universities undoubtedly was never better; it is education that is in trouble, and unless it can be salvaged, this American civilization will face generations of inhumane doctors, robot lawyers, and scientists divorced from the purposes of humanity. ◉

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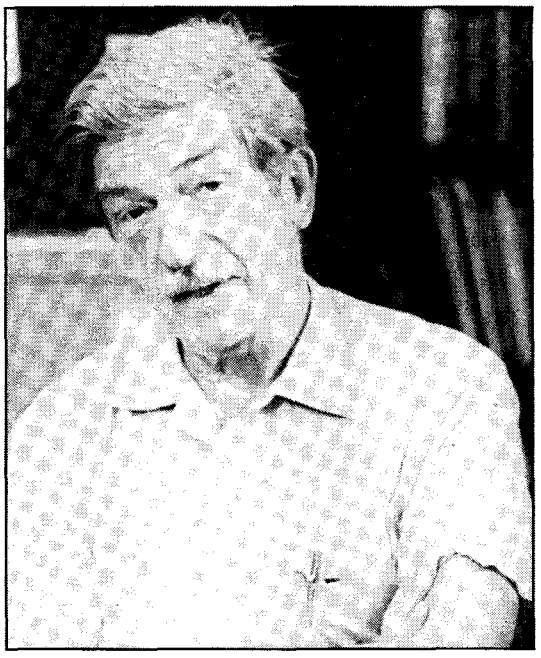

Harvard Crimson

Government professor Samuel Beer: "The Gen Ed program has some good courses, but it's a miscellany, and that's the real danger—it poses the threat of what Whitehead termed 'the damnable curse of inert ideas.' "

flickering fire, and dozens of books lined the wall behind his chair, their bindings torn and their titles worn off from frequent handling.

"Something could be said of Gen Ed that was not understood by the faculty or the students, and it is best illustrated by an example," Riesman mused. "A course called 'the camel' was proposed to the Gen Ed committee. Everyone's first reaction was to laugh. I investigated and found that the teacher was an Islamic scholar who had studied the culture of the camel—Islamic culture, Nomadic culture. The course was a serious introduction to the ecology of semi-Arabic countries. It was to be offered to a student population whose knowledge of the subject is provincial or Zionist propaganda or both."

He paused, then added, "The answer, perhaps, is to provide a course for those students who have no basic background. But I'm not convinced that the survey course is today what it was when we were more certain of our areas of knowledge and less of our areas of ignorance."

Another of Riesman's fears stems from the fact that many of the professors who ignite a student's imagination lack the respect of their peers; for faculty members score points not so much with illustrious teaching as with illustrious research. Nor does he make any secret of his distaste for some of his colleagues' departmental thinking; and he wonders whether the contributions such professors have made to the core steer it from its purpose. Riesman voiced these fears to the faculty when a new curriculum was first proposed. "I would have wanted to have a better sense of who would be available to teach core courses and whether they would pass departmental muster," he says today, "but that would have meant a slower process of reform; it would have meant working more incrementally." The reformers, evidently, did not feel such an expenditure of time was necessary; Riesman still winces from their reactions to his comments—they called him a "tinkerer."

Even Riesman, however, says that such problems should not deflect reformers from pursuing their goal. In the end, the significance of Henry Rosovsky's movement is not whether the proposals are accepted or rejected, or even whether they are implemented with glorious new courses or with a typewritten report that collects dust on a shelf. The reform's importance is rather that it has inspired a search for new methods, new philosophies, new blood to quicken the pulse of modern education. "We live within the secular cathedrals of higher learning in the absence of the convictions that built the cathedrals," says Riesman. The search for those convictions, core's adherents argue, is exactly what the reform is all about.

"The Redbook had coherence and elicited a lot of good courses, but that was secondary," says Beer. "The crucial thing was that it found something that was trying to be born. It didn't impose a structure so much as it opened a door. It created a spirit—what Lionel Trilling calls 'the hum and the buzz,' the living part of the idea. A war had just come to an end, and we had had a very close brush. Before the war we had been sophisticated and cultivated—but not after that breathtaking and sobering experience. All that culture could have come to an end. Conant believed that freedom was the soil in which science grew. If people still felt the relevance of that experience, his General Education program would still work."

Conant's perception of the connection between thought and progress is no less pertinent today than it was 30 years ago. Time and its technology are sweeping us into a future filled with challenges that will require analytical ability even more than operational skills. The "educated man" who knows isolated facts but cannot apply them will be of little use in such a future. Society will need instead the kind of intellectual recently described by John Knowles, president of the Rockefeller Foundation—the intellectual who "integrates and synthesizes disparate knowledge into a coherent whole and tells us what *should* be done humanistically, as well as what *can* be done scientifically and technically." The Harvard reform, then, is necessary "not because of its immediate, practicable importance," as Riesman says, "but because of its lifelong importance—the importance of avoiding the insularity of the enlightened." ◉

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Helen Hayes and Fred Astaire in "A Family Upside Down."
A Xerox Television Special. Sunday, April 9th on NBC.

XEROX

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Jim Crow Is Alive and Well in the Old "New South"

by Laughlin McDonald

LAST JUNE, a black couple traveling through Moultrie, Georgia, came out of the blistering summer heat into the cool marble foyer of the old Hotel Colquitt and asked for a room. The manager nodded, and in an aside to the desk clerk, he casually reminded him to "put 'em up on the third floor" (set aside for blacks because they tend to be noisy, the manager explained later to a white guest). Had that couple walked across the street to French's Billiard Parlor, on South Main, they would not have been welcome. Had they gone to Johnny's Drive In, on the outskirts of town, for dinner, they would probably have been refused service altogether. Travelers may not always suspect it, but the 5,000 blacks who live there know for sure: Moultrie is a Jim Crow town.

Less than 80 miles from Jimmy Carter's home in Plains, Moultrie is no different from thousands of other towns and hamlets across the South. In all of them, in spite of recent assertions to the contrary, race still makes the difference.

When Carter was inaugurated as governor of Georgia, in 1971, he declared that race no longer mattered in his state: "I say to you quite frankly that the time for racial discrimination is over. Our people have already made this major and difficult decision." When Georgia's Andrew Young, then a congressman and now U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, seconded Carter's nomination for president at the Democratic National Convention in New York, Young said the same thing: "I'm ready to lay down the burden of race, and Jimmy Carter comes from a part of the country which, whether you know it or not, has done just that."

Laughlin McDonald is director of the southern regional office of the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation, in Atlanta.

In fact, the extent of the change in race relations and attitudes in the South has been greatly exaggerated. (This is due in part to the Southerners' euphoria over the election of "one of our own" to the presidency.) Southerners have had a long tradition of announcing that they have laid down the burden of color and have solved the racial problem. Even before Henry Grady popularized the phrase in a speech to the New England Society of New York, in 1886, successive generations of Southerners had proclaimed their South to be a "New South," a region in which racial justice, among other things, was all but an accomplished fact.

To be sure, racial justice hasn't meant the same thing to each generation. To one, it was the Black Codes; to others, Jim Crow. Later, it was massive resistance; more recently, it has been benign neglect. But for the majority culture, the conviction that at any particular moment the South has hit on precisely the best way to deal with the racial problem has remained an article of faith. So Southerners—constantly declaring the advent of a new, right-thinking South—have ritually announced that they have solved the problem, because for many, *any* progress in race relations is too much—or at the least, quite enough to convince them that no further changes are needed.

But for all the formal changes in southern institutions brought about by the courts and the modern civil rights acts, the South today remains a region deeply divided along racial lines. To be black is still to be poor, undereducated, and socially isolated from the majority community; to live in substandard, segregated housing; to be underrepresented on juries; to be shut out from meaningful participation in the elective process; to be excluded from employment in all but the lowest paying, most menial jobs; and to be generally ignored by local officials in the allocation of services and of

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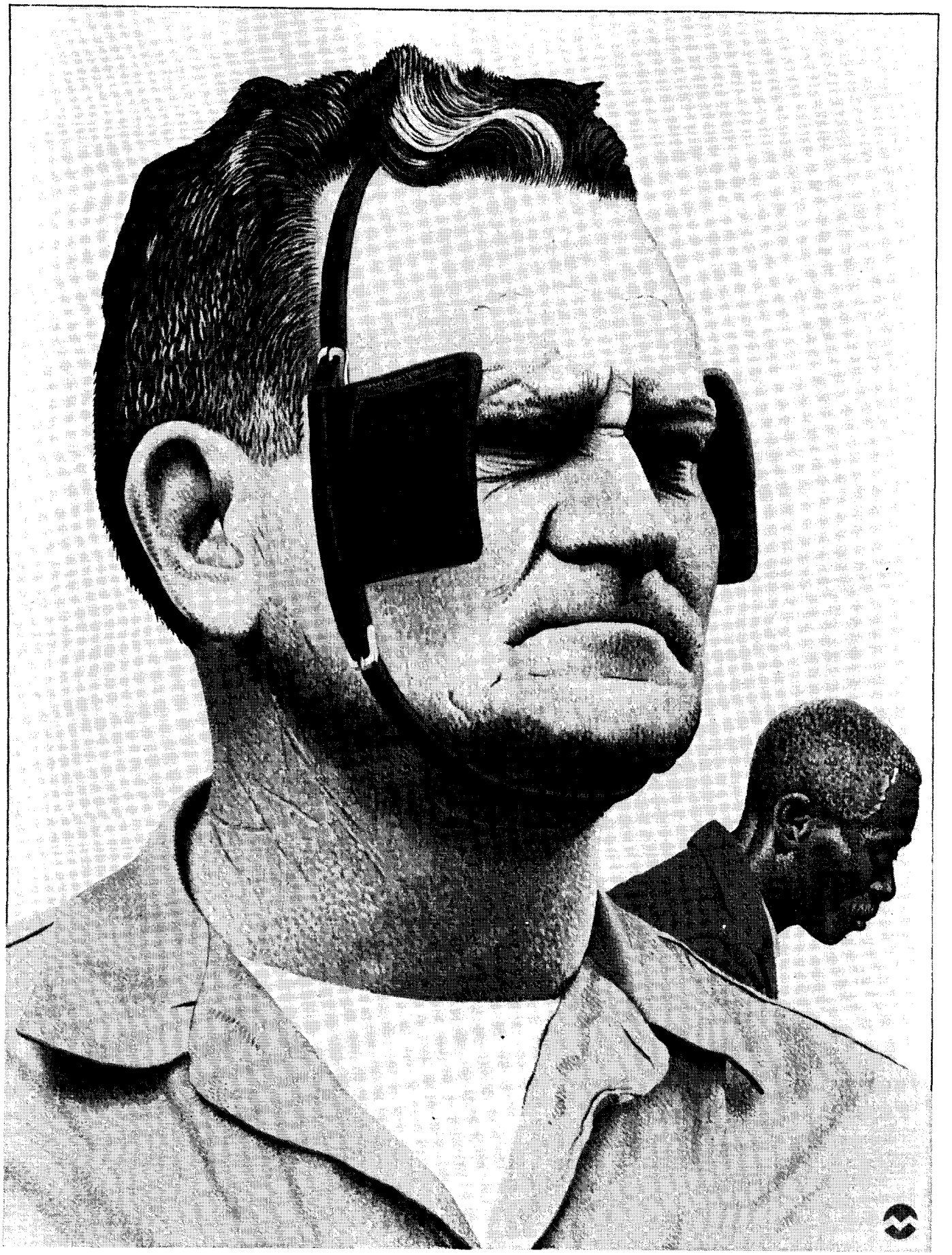

Marvin Mattelson

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"Northwest Moultrie is black; southeast Moultrie is white. Civic and social clubs—such as the Lions, Elks, Rotary, Kiwanis, VFW, Women's Club, and Boy Scouts—and all the city's churches are as segregated today as they were 100 years ago."

appointments to boards and commissions. These conditions are true everywhere in the South, except in those few places where blacks constitute a substantial majority of the population and have gained a measure of political control.

Moultrie, where blacks make up 38 percent of the population, will do as an example. Data from the 1970 census show that:

- More than half of the black families in Moultrie live below the poverty level, compared with 11 percent of the white families.
- Only 13 percent of adult blacks over the age of twenty-five finished high school.
- Nearly half of the black-occupied homes lack some or all plumbing.

Other facts lie beyond the range of the census takers. Public and private housing are rigidly segregated: Northwest Moultrie is black; southeast Moultrie is white. Civic and social clubs—such as the Lions, Elks, Rotary, Kiwanis, VFW, Women's Club, and Boy Scouts—and all the city's churches are as segregated today as they were 100 years ago. Blacks are grossly underrepresented on boards and commissions over which the city government has appointive power. No black has ever been appointed to a civil defense position; to the library, zoning, or pension boards; to the Airport Authority; as tax assessor; or to any vacancy on the city council occasioned by the death or resignation of an incumbent.

Moultrie hasn't outlived its past, a past clouded by a Negrophobia that has included unspeakable acts of personal violence. In 1921, a black man accused of murdering a young white girl was taken a few miles out of town by a mob, tied to a tree, castrated, made to eat his genitals, and then burned alive. That night bands of white terrorists roamed the countryside, burning a black church and whipping several black women. Pictures of the immolated corpse were circulated in the black community as a warning to would-be transgressors. A year later, almost to the day, another black man was charged with an attempted criminal attack on a white woman. He was seized by a mob, handcuffed, taken to the scene of the crime, shot, and then dragged behind an automobile. A grand jury was hurriedly convened the next day to investigate the lynching, but the panel adjourned after a few hours because it was unable to get any evidence upon which to base indictments. The Moultrie *Observer*, the town's only newspaper, soft-pedaled the affair and speculated that the lynch mob was small: "It was pointed out that he was not swung to a tree and that he was shot less than twenty-five times.... It was hardly believed that this would have been the way the body would have been found if the crowd that participated had been of the proportion mobs usually assume on such occasions."

Although violence has subsided in Moultrie, old attitudes persist. During the mid-1960s, the city hired its first black police officers to help control civil rights demonstrations. But the black policemen were not allowed to arrest whites, to patrol white areas of town, or even to ride in the same squad cars with white officers. The city jail was racially segregated until 1974, long after the policy of segregation in penal facilities had been declared unconstitutional by the courts. And before the 1977 revision of the lists containing the names of those eligible for jury duty, blacks were underrepresented by 68 percent on trial jury lists and by 74 percent on grand jury lists.

Public schools were not desegregated in Moultrie until 1970, more than 15 bitter years after the decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, which held that separate but equal schools are unconstitutional. When Moultrie schools were forced to desegregate, white residents went to court and claimed that unless the black student population was diluted by bringing in white students from the surrounding areas, angry white parents would enroll their children in all-white private schools or move beyond the city limits to escape integration. An arrangement was finally worked out that consolidated city and county schools and produced an "acceptable" ratio of black students to white students.

BLACKS IN MOULTRIE have been the victims not only of all the traditional methods of black disfranchisement—literacy tests, all-white primaries, and discriminatory purges of the voter rolls—but also of more subtle modern practices as well. Today, for instance, the municipal elections are supervised, the polls staffed, and the ballots counted by the Moultrie Lions Club, a private organization that does not accept blacks as members.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, with its ban on literacy tests, promised a new day for Moultrie's blacks. After its passage, there was indeed a surge in black voter registration. But the city council countered effectively by ordering that the outcome of municipal elections be determined by a majority instead of by a plurality vote, with a runoff between the two highest vote getters. Under the old plurality scheme, a minority candidate had at least a chance of being elected if several white candidates ran and split the white vote. But with a majority vote required, the splintered whites could regroup behind their runoff candidate and sweep the election. That is exactly what was done in 1973 to John Cross, a local black businessman who, in a race against four whites, won a plurality of votes for a seat on the city council. In the runoff, Cross's white opponent easily won the election by picking up 1,095 additional votes that had previously been cast for the other white candidates. (Because of racial polarization in Moultrie, blacks are clobbered at the polls. Whites rarely vote

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"Carter and Young both know that the South hasn't yet cast down the burden of race. One can excuse their public hyperbole as euphoria brought on by the excitement of political victory. The danger is that people will believe them."

for blacks, and there are more whites who can vote than there are franchised blacks. Block voting, often described as "politics," is in reality another form of disfranchisement of black voters.)

Three years later, Cross discovered that the majority vote requirement was not lawful because the city had failed to secure approval for it under the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The requirement was eventually submitted to the Justice Department, which objected to it after finding that "block voting along racial lines may exist" in Moultrie and that the "majority vote requirement may have the effect of abridging minority voting rights." Moultrie has had to return to the plurality system, but Cross was never given his seat on the council.

The first black ever to hold elective office in Moultrie is Frank Wilson, elected to the city council after the majority vote requirement was thrown out last year. Wilson qualified just before the deadline and ran against four whites. Naturally, the white vote was split, and Wilson, who held on to most of the black vote, squeaked by with a plurality. Whether whites will select a consensus candidate before the next election and avoid splintering their vote remains to be seen.

Block voting and the continuing importance of race in Moultrie's elections are apparent from the returns in Georgia's 1974 election for lieutenant governor, in which J. B. Stoner was a candidate. Stoner's platform was white supremacy, pure and simple. He vowed if elected to "wipe out race mixing" and "reverse all of the bad laws and court decisions that are against white people." Stoner, who one can assume got no black votes, had strong white voter appeal in Moultrie. He came in fourth in a field of 10.

What do Moultrie officials say about the poverty that exists in the black community, about the segregated housing, the block voting, and the deep racial feelings that still agitate the city? They don't even know they exist. They say that the bad old days are over. They say that Moultrie has solved the race problem.

The remarkable thing about Moultrie is that it is not remarkable at all. It is like the rest of Georgia, differing only in minor details. In Harris County, home of the plush Callaway Gardens resort, the percentage of blacks who finish high school is lower than in Moultrie, while the percentage of black dwellings lacking some or all plumbing is substantially higher. In McDuffie County, across the state from Moultrie, and in Thomson, the "Camellia City," racial block voting is so chronic that no black has ever won a contested election for public office. One black did win an uncontested school board seat in the early Seventies, when it became obvious even to local authorities that they must comply with federal desegregation mandates. In Jimmy Carter's own Sumter County, no black has held an office in county government since Reconstruction.

What these places have in common with each other, and with the South in general, is that the lives and affairs of their citizens are dominated by race. President Carter and Ambassador Young notwithstanding, Southerners have yet to decide that the time for discrimination is over.

One of the most hopeful signs of a change in southern racial attitudes is the election of increasing numbers of blacks to public office. It is true that since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, blacks have had more success at the polls than they have had since Reconstruction. In 1970 there were 565 blacks elected to office in the 11 states of the old Confederacy. By 1976 the figure had more than tripled, to 1,944. But paradoxically, the success of the relatively few blacks who have been elected underscores the formidable barriers facing the many who run for office and are defeated.

While the number of elected black officials in the South sounds large, the percentage is actually quite small. According to the Atlanta-based Voter Education Project, blacks constitute less than 3 percent of the elected officeholders in the South, even though blacks make up more than 20 percent of the region's population. The significance of even this modest showing is diminished by the fact that the overwhelming majority of blacks run in districts where blacks predominate. In Georgia, for example, 21 of the 24 blacks in the legislature and 16 of the 19 blacks who hold county-wide offices (excluding school boards) were elected from districts in which blacks are in the majority.

It's not that the whites in these districts no longer care deeply about race. Most of them do. It's just that they are outnumbered at the polls. As for those blacks who were elected in predominantly white districts, many were unopposed or were put in office to create the appearance of fairness in the elective process and to thereby blunt reapportionment efforts. And a few very special candidates, like former Congressman Young, who represented a metropolitan Atlanta white district, were elected because they were clearly so much better than their opponents that their race was not enough of a detriment to keep them out of office.

Carter and Young both know that the South hasn't yet cast down the burden of race. One can excuse their public hyperbole as euphoria brought on by the excitement of political victory. The danger is that people will believe them. If the race problem has been solved, as they say, then there's no reason anymore to push for desegregated housing, equal employment opportunities, special educational programs for minority students, and apportionment plans that give blacks a realistic chance to participate in elective government. But without a continuing effort to remove the effects of past discrimination and to implement remedies that actually work, racial equality will remain the theory and not the practice in all the Moultries of the South. ◉

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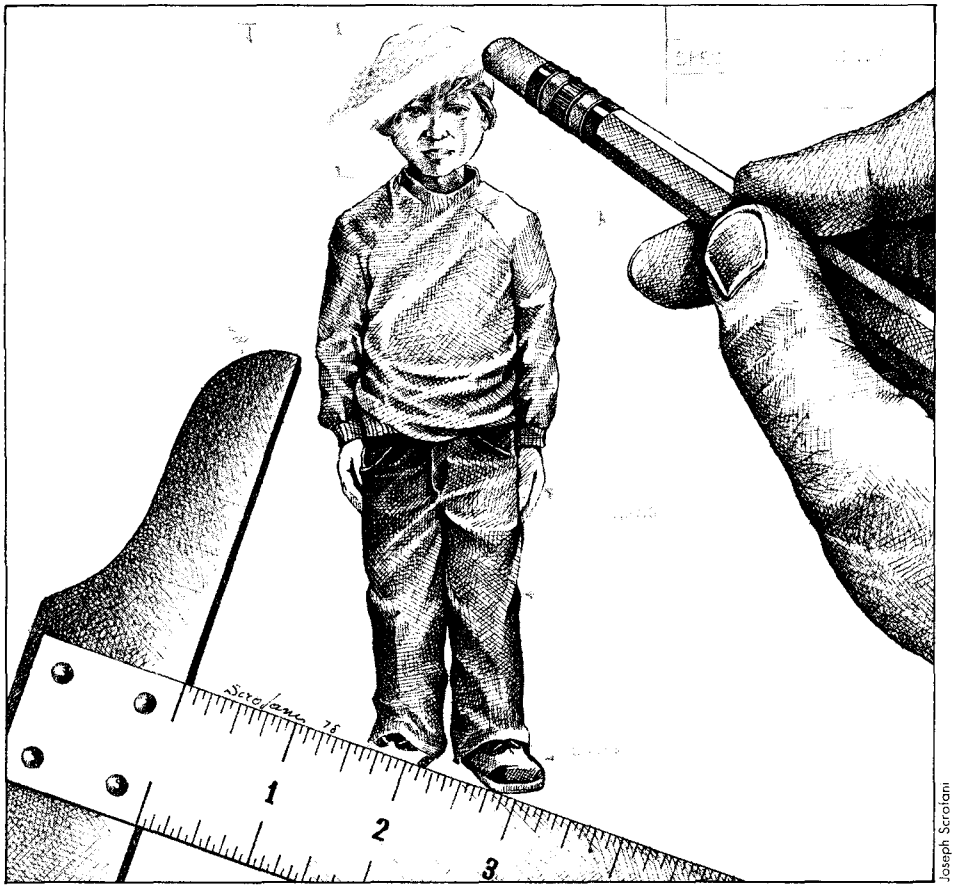
Scienceletter

The "Elastic Mind" Movement: Rationalizing Child Neglect?



Joseph Scrofani

by Albert Rosenfeld

WOULD YOU BELIEVE that the way children are raised by their parents—and whether their homes are happy or not—has little or nothing to do with the way they turn out as adults? And, further, that their experiences in infancy have very little impact on their later lives—indeed, may simply vanish and be forgotten? I don't believe it either. At least, not yet. In fact, I find such ideas outlandish and disquieting. They directly contradict beliefs we have long cherished. Nevertheless, these are the ideas being espoused lately by some highly esteemed behavioral scientists who specialize in child development and child rearing.

I had discerned this, in my peripheral awareness, only as a slight, insignificant, and probably fleeting trend. But last November I got my first inkling that the trend had developed into what amounts to a virtual movement. The occasion was a seminar at Rockefeller University sponsored by the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing. One of the speakers was psychologist Bertram J. Cohler, of the University of Chicago, who has been studying the children of chronically depressed mothers. The effects of such upbringing, he reported, are clearly deleterious to a child's emotional life; moreover, the effects are still visible at the age of ten, which was as far as Cohler had followed his study group at that time. Yet Cohler is convinced that by adulthood all these troubles are dissipated and that no long-range harm is done. Why this assurance despite his own results?

"Well," he explained, "all the longitudinal studies"—those studies that follow the same people through time, from childhood into their later years— "show that what happens in early childhood has no demonstrable impact on adult life. People who had an unhappy childhood do just as well later on and are just as happy as those who had a happy childhood." He further insisted that the way parents raise their kids and how troubled the parents themselves might be doesn't really matter very much because the kids will turn out the way they will turn out; people keep remaking their lives *all* their lives, and what happens to them later, including what they do for themselves, pretty well compensates for earlier disadvantages in upbringing. As for the current emphasis on "parenting" and on training young people for parenthood, Cohler scoffed at such programs as a waste of time, money, and energy. All this to an audience of science writers from around the country whose stories would soon be going out over the wires.

In the press room later, under sharp questioning, Cohler gently but firmly held his ground and emphasized that he and his colleagues at Chicago were far from alone in their views. He felt, rather, that he was expressing what would soon be the consensual stance among leading experts in the field. Among the names of those he said supported his position was that of Harvard psychologist Jerome Kagan, whom I have long respected.

Before I had a chance to call Kagan for firsthand confirmation, I received in the mail an advance copy of the first issue (January 1978) of an interesting new magazine called *Human Nature*. In it, sure enough, was an article by Kagan called "The Baby's Elastic Mind," dealing with the very themes Cohler had sounded. I was actually more stunned to see such ideas in print under Kagan's by-line than to hear them expressed verbally by Cohler. Many of the beliefs that are still held by most experts of my own acquaintance, and that are still part of my own convictions, are here referred to by Kagan in the past tense, as though they already had a quaintly anachronistic flavor. A few examples:

"Western scientists used to believe... that infantile autism, a form of childhood psychosis, could develop simply because a mother rejected her baby."

"Many still believe that most of an infant's experiences have effects that reach many years into the future."

"Accordingly, we have awarded certain early experiences a mysterious power. As a result, middle-class parents worry about providing sufficient stimulation to their month-old infant or wonder whether failure to unite the newborn with its mother immediately after birth might have harmful consequences."

"Parents were supposed, through proper

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nurture, to prepare their children to be psychologically healthy adults."

Kagan's article concludes that new discoveries—which he details—about the human infant "imply that his first experiences may be permanently lost.... I suspect that it is not until a child is five or six years old...that we get a more reliable preview of the future. The infant's mind may be more like a sandy beach on a windy day than a reel of recording tape."

None of this is to be taken lightly, coming, as it does, from the likes of Jerome Kagan, who is indisputably one of the world's leading authorities on child development. While I was still trying to absorb the shock of Kagan's piece, the February issue of *Psychology Today* arrived. It contains an article called "The Myth of the Vulnerable Child." And the title states its message quite literally: The idea that children are vulnerable creatures is a myth—especially the idea that they are vulnerable to the vagaries of parental behavior. The author of this piece is research psychologist Arlene Skolnick of Berkeley's Institute of Human Development. "In the twentieth century," she writes, "this traditional American obsession with children has generated new kinds of child-rearing experts—psychologists and psychiatrists, clothed in the authority of modern science, who issue prescriptions for child rearing. Most child-care advice assumes that if the parents administer the proper prescriptions, the child will develop as planned. It places exaggerated faith not only in the perfectibility of children and their parents but in the infallibility of the particular child-rearing technique as well."

In fact, very few of the experts who have recently been dispensing child-care advice make any such assumptions. Nor do they place such faith in the perfectibility of either children or parents or in the infallibility of their techniques. Most of the advisers attempt, rather, to guide parents cautiously away from the more egregious errors that parents can and do make to keep the child from becoming any more of a mess than is absolutely necessary. The advice is usually offered more in this spirit (unless one is talking about a rare type like B. F. Skinner) than with the voice of rigid authority. Indeed, the more popular advisers, such as Dr. Spock, keep reassuring parents that if they follow their own feelings and instincts, they can't go too far wrong. Most child-rearing experts are reasonably modest in their pretensions. Even so, they have in general felt secure in the knowledge that the attitudes and the behavior of parents do constitute important factors in the child's later emotional life and that what happens to a child in those early, terribly vulnerable years from infancy to five or six can, and frequently does, have a shaping influence on that same person as an adolescent and as an adult. The best that Skolnick will concede in her article, however, is that "parental determinism," as she calls it, does contain "a kernel of truth—like all myths."

I HAVE PERHAPS been guilty of oversimplifying the specific stands of this new movement (though not its overall stance). I have presented it this way in order to underline what troubles me about it. Before proceeding farther in this vein, however, it bears emphasizing that the movement's general position contains a number of valuable ingredients when stated less extremely—as they are, for instance, by sociologist Orville G. Brim, Jr., head of the Foundation for Child Development. (I am not sure he would like to be included as part of any movement, though he is coediting a book on some of this movement's themes with Kagan.) There is certainly no *necessary* connection between a disadvantaged childhood and a troubled adulthood. Many children do survive, and even thrive, in the face of every adversity, as so many biographies of the great readily attest. Parents—and especially mothers—have taken too much of the blame when children turn out "bad" (by whatever definition) and have had too great a burden of guilt laid upon them. Poor and disadvantaged parents have, as Skolnick points out, been faulted for consequences that more often result from the failings of the community at large. Most important, perhaps, is Brim's point that damage of various sorts in childhood has all too often been looked upon as irreversible; and if something is labeled irreversible, then there is little incentive to try to turn it around. Yet, much of what is done to children *can* be undone—and has been shown to be undoable when the necessary effort is put forth. Cohler is right: People can and do often succeed in refashioning their own lives. In all these senses, I join Skolnick in deploring "parental determinism."

What is it that troubles me, then?

One source of disquiet is the conviction that if the movement's more extreme statements are taken seriously, they can all too easily let parents—and the community, in all its social and governmental manifestations—off the hook. If what happens in early childhood doesn't matter, if children

"Mr. Potter is out. The recording machine is broken. This is a parrot speaking."

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aren't really vulnerable after all, if kids are going to make it okay nevertheless, if poor parenting (whatever that can mean under the newly defined circumstances) is of no great consequence, then what's all the fuss about? Why orate about "child advocacy"? Why practice "child psychiatry"? Why give child-rearing advice at all?

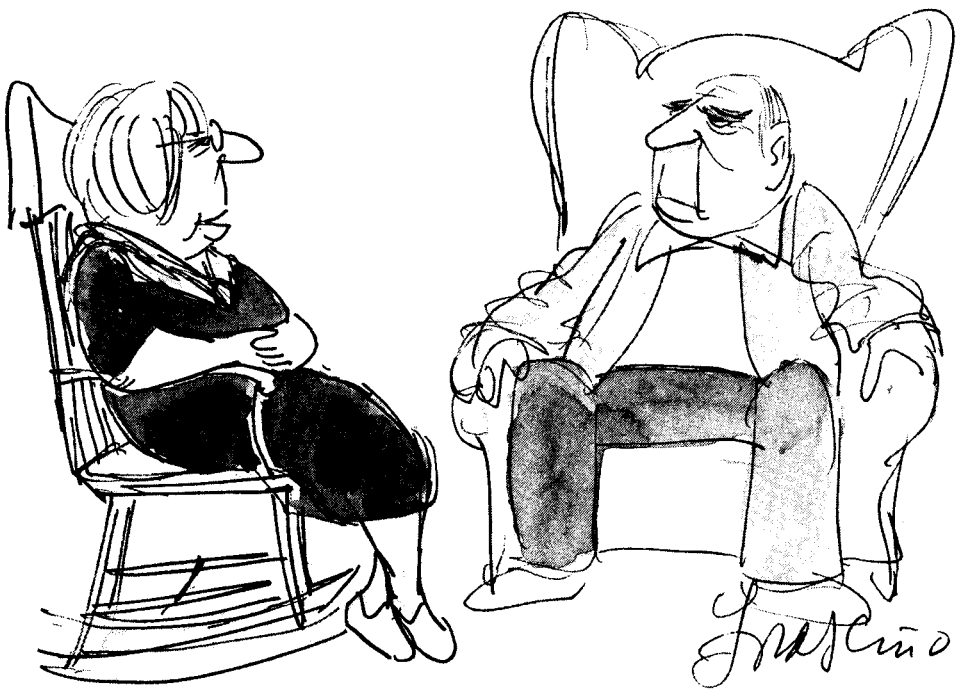
Yet look at what's really happening out there in our world. The statistics on child abuse are obscene. Family life is perceived to be increasingly fragmented. The landscape abounds with children in anguish. Many parents seem increasingly irked by the responsibilities of parenthood. Will the movement not give all of us license to care even less about children than we in our celebrated "child-centered society" now do? In a word, the movement appears to me to be a big step backward. And at whose expense? The children's.

To characterize such dedicated people as Kagan, Cohler, and Skolnick as being anti-child would be most unfair; they spend their lives thinking about children and children's welfare. Just the same, the net effect of their pronouncements could turn out to be the inadvertent encouragement of anti-child behavior. (Truly loving parents, of course, find it sufficiently rewarding to treat children well so they'll feel good now, regardless of later outcome.) If they were making their statements based upon a firm body of substantial evidence, I might feel that well, we just have to swallow hard and accept the consequences. But such studies are fairly tenuous at this point—much more so, it seems to me, than the case for the special vulnerability of early childhood and for the profound ill effects of certain kinds of defective parenting. Thus, these psychologists perform a disservice by the premature publicizing of what must be looked upon as tentative conclusions—a charge more usually directed at journalists.

THE CAREFUL investigations of mother-infant bonding carried out by pediatricians Marshall H. Klaus and John H. Kennell, of the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, offer impressive and only recently accepted evidence that parent-child interaction even in the first hours of life can affect later emotional life. Apart from the intuitive conviction that one acquires from observing one's own and one's friends' children, the formidable accumulation of psychiatric and psychoanalytic case histories offers quantities of evidence (mostly retrospective, to be sure) of the connection between early childhood and adult troubles. Moreover, many longitudinal studies of the very kind cited by Cohler and Skolnick, studies made by respected investigators such as René Spitz, Ian Gregory, Margaret Fries, Elsie Broussard, Robert Skeel, Marie Crissey, Sylvia Brody and Sidney Axelrad, Stella Chess and Alexander Thomas, among others, point to the strong influence of what happens to children in their early, vulnerable years and its effect on their later emotional life. All this, and more, adds up to too strong a body of already-established evidence to brush aside so cavalierly. Those in the movement have every right to challenge any assumption they believe to be prevalent and challengeable. But one wishes they would frame their challenges less flamboyantly, considering the gravity of the possible consequences if they turn out to be wrong—as I so far believe them to be.

Analyst Gilbert W. Kliman, of the New York Psychoanalytic Society, is among those who deplore the new and in his view unwarranted direction the movement represents. He fears that the conclusions expressed will be latched onto all too eagerly by our contemporaries, parents and non-parents alike. "We have unequivocal long-term evidence," says Kliman, "that troubled children are often under the compulsion to repeat their early traumatic experiences as adults, to visit similar experiences upon their own children, and that babies who fail to get an adequate diet of 'stimulus nutrition' from a reliable care giver are at great risk of developing later emotional problems. We have equally clear evidence that some very severe early-life problems can be reversed, even when due in part to pathological treatment by parents. But such reversal is achieved at great cost and only with great effort. Prevention would be so much better! And it too is achievable. That's why I hate to see any move afoot that will devalue or undercut the necessary preventive programs.

"We in our culture," Kliman goes on, "are finding it increasingly difficult to bear the pain of our children. We no longer have the excuse we used to have when people had large families and could say they were too busy to give each child a lot of individual attention. So we must rationalize our collective neglect of children by denying that the neglect does them any harm. Just as each of us has individually repressed all the painful memories of those earliest, most vulnerable years, we would like to be able to say of children in general: Early experience doesn't matter. It all just goes away and is forgotten." ◉



"I thought it was my eyes, but even with these new glasses your words are out of sync with your lips."

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Moral Fiction

by John Gardner

WHAT HAS GONE WRONG? Why is it that even those of our writers who insist that they care about argument are for the most part incapable of constructing an argument that will hold?

To some of our best-known modernists, outrage is more appealing than are careful exploration and persuasion, for which the fuel can only be concern. For all the power of her journalistic writing and for all the true feeling in some passages of her fiction, Joan Didion's novels *Play It As It Lays* and *A Book of Common Prayer* present, too often, fashionably pained characters who express fashionable opinions and black peeves. Insofar as we're unable to care about the characters, we can work up no interest in the issues; or if we do care about the ideas, it is only because we feel obliged to, and we accept the writer's value judgments for the same bad reason. To take another example, though Walker Percy is capable of writing fairly interesting novels, like *The Moviegoer*, he is capable of descending, as in *Lancelot*, to sententious rehashing of ideas out of Nietzsche and Dostoevsky on the moral outsider (this time a despicable one), adding nothing personal but his Catholic anxiety and his scorn of people he dislikes. Harry Crews, like many a renegade fundamentalist, slams away, on and on, at those much picked-on villains, uneducated and unsophisticated Southerners—the same people Anne Tyler selects for her novels and, having more charity in her religion, presents as partly admirable human beings. Harry Crewses are at least as common as Anne Tylers. Too often we find in contemporary fiction not true morality, which requires sympathy and responsible judgment, but a fierce code that under closer inspection turns out to be a parochial group's manners and habitual prejudices elevated to the status of ethical imperatives, axioms for which bigotry or hate, not love, is the premise.

If we are unable to distinguish between true morality—life-affirming, just, and compassionate behavior—and trivial moral fashion, we begin to doubt morality itself. It becomes possible for a man as intelligent as Norman Mailer to speak of the murderer Charles Manson as "intellectually courageous," for the brave pursuit of truth changes utterly when truth becomes whim. The man so infected may begin to feel guilt chiefly for possessing a moral code at all. Confusion and doubt become the primary civilized emotions.

In such a society, the careless thinker can slide into the persuasion that the celebration of true morality has ceased to be the serious writer's function and may even be pernicious. If the writer, so persuaded, is a decent human being, he or she tends to adopt one of two humane and praiseworthy, but in the long run unfruitful, programs: Either the writer celebrates important but passing concerns, such as social justice for particular minorities (dated and thus trivial once the goal has been achieved), or the writer serves only as historian, holding up a mirror to his age but not changing it, simply imitating, as Pound said, "its accelerated grimace." Both programs have their significance and value.

But in comparison with the true artist's celebration of the permanently moral, both programs are nevertheless secondary and can only produce art that with the passing of its age must lose force. Moreover, weak programs can lead to screeching or straining for effect. E. L. Doctorow, in *Ragtime*, urges social justice in a more or less moving and persuasive way, but he is not concerned with true morality. After talk of policemen, evil capitalists, and strikebreakers, there is a scene in which the anarchist Emma Goldman gives a massage to the now naked, famous beauty Evelyn Nesbit, while a character known only as Mother's Younger Brother peeks from a closet. It's a scene filled, naturally, with prurient interest and filled, also, with a strong and convincing tirade on women's rights. Though Doctorow can speak feelingly of women's rights, taking a stand that is moral, he is not deeply involved in his characters' lives. Things do not happen in the world as Doctorow claims they do. Put off by fraudulence, the reader may incline to be suspicious of all the writer says, including what he says about women.

Among *suivants* of the second program, that of holding up a mirror to the age, the best is perhaps Donald Barthelme. He has a sharp eye for modern man's doubts and anxieties, free-floating guilt, politics, manners, turns of speech. At times (as in "The Explanation"), he seems to aim at a satire of despair constructed out of bemused weariness, irascibility, New York stylishness, and, sometimes, disgust. Both in drawings and in fictions, he imitates cleverly the modern world's sadness and confused sense of fear and loss, and in even the most fabulous or refracted of his fictions, he keeps a careful eye on how the world really works. He has all the qualities of "talent" that Tolstoy listed in his early "Introduction to the Works of Guy de Maupassant," namely:

> (1) a correct, that is, a moral relation of the author to his subject; (2) clearness of expression, or beauty of form—the two are identical; and (3) sincerity, that is, a sincere feeling of love or hatred of what the artist depicts.

But in Barthelme all three qualities are enfeebled. He knows what is wrong, but he has no clear image of, or interest in, how things ought to be. His sincerity, though authentic, is remote: He cares not about people but about ideas or concepts —in effect, painterly images: the Phantom of the Opera, Snow White more or less realistically conceived (neurotic modern life played against myth). His diagnosis of the evils of the age can be amusing and moving. On occasion, he celebrates a real human value, such as stubbornness, or touches on our tragic vulnerability, as in "Sentence." The world would be a duller place without him, as it would be without F.A.O. Schwarz. But no one would accuse him of creating what Tolstoy called "religious art." His world is not one of important values but only of values mislaid, emotions comically or sadly unrealized, a burden of mysteries no one has the energy

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John Gardner's most recent novel, October Light, *won the NBCC award for fiction in 1976. His new book,* On Moral Fiction, *from which this article is adapted, will be published later this month by Basic Books.*

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to solve. It is a world he seems to have little wish to escape; or if one of his characters feels an urge to transcend the limitations of his world, as in "City of Churches," we get only the resolve and the promise, seldom the act. His writing has emotional control, clarity of style, and at least an impression of life's tragic waste; but even at his best, as in *The Dead Father*, Barthelme goes not for the profound but for the clever.

Great art celebrates life's potential, offering a vision unmistakably and unsentimentally rooted in love. "Love" is of course another of those embarrassing words, perhaps a word even more embarrassing than "morality," but it names the single quality without which true art cannot exist. It is a quality that shouts from good novels both slight and monumental—from John Irving and Toni Morrison to Italo Calvino and Thomas Mann. Without love we get the ice-cold intellectual style of most academics or the worst fiction in *The New Yorker*.

Despite the labors of academic artists and those sophisticates who are embarrassed by emotion, it seems all but self-evident that it is for the pleasure of exercising our capacity to love that we pick up a book at all. We read literature in the hope of experiencing our highest, most selfless emotion, either to reach a sublime communication with the maker of the work, sharing his affirmations as lovers do, or to find characters we love as we do real people. Ultimately, in fact, plot exists only to give the characters means of finding and revealing themselves, and setting, only to give them a place to stand. As for "thought," it is simply what the characters say or would say if they were wiser and had our distance from their story. In art, morality and love are inextricably bound: We affirm what is good—for the characters in particular and for humanity in general—because we care. The artist who has no strong feeling about his characters—the artist who can feel passionate only about his words or ideas—has no urgent reason to think hard about the characters' problems, the "themes" in his fiction. He imitates human gesture in the movements of his puppets, but he does not worry as a father worries about the behavior of his son; and the result is a fictional universe one would not want one's loved ones forced to inhabit.

This is the final point John Fowles makes in his novel on the modern novel, *Daniel Martin*: "No true compassion without will, no true will without compassion." Without will—the artist's conscious determination to take his characters and their problems seriously—no artist can achieve real compassion. And without compassion—without real and deep love for his "subjects" (the people he writes about and, by extension, all human beings)—no artist can summon the will to make true art; he will be satisfied, instead, with clever language or with cynical jokes and too easy, dire solutions like those common in contemporary fiction.

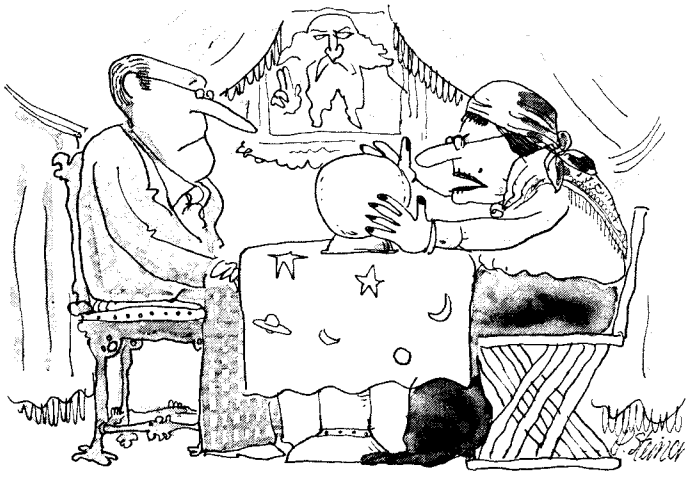
At the risk of belaboring Fowles's point, consider what happens in the work of three contemporary American novelists who have been widely praised: Norman Mailer, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., and Joseph Heller. None of the three cares enough about his characters to use them as anything but examples in a forced proof. The novelist's "message," in each case, is only loosely related to the characters: They exist for the sake of the predetermined message, not as subjects for the artist's open-minded exploration of what he can honestly say.

Though their methods differ, all three writers are essentially transcribers of the moods of their time. They do not really think things out, though unlike post-modernists they to some extent claim to be truth tellers. Focusing on message and indifferent to real human beings, as represented by their characters, they take either no position or else smug, slogany positions. In place of wisdom and careful analysis—products of the artists' will and compassion—we find, if anything, cant, cynicism, or dramatic gimmickry. Their novels are interesting and arresting infernal entertainment, but they contain nothing that will hold, nothing that will help.

We find a subtler kind of failure in Saul Bellow, the most admired of the old-fashioned moderns, who is actually not a novelist at heart but an essayist disguised as a writer of fiction. In *Seize the Day*, *The Adventures of Augie March*, and *Henderson the Rain King*, Bellow makes serious use of fictional techniques, but even there the essayist-lecturer is always ready to step in, stealing the stage from the fictional characters to make the fiction more "important."

Bellow's self-indulgence takes various forms. On occasion it appears as stylistic fiddling—as language designed mainly to show off Bellow's gifts as philosopher, poet, mimic, or Jewish humorist—not aimed, as it should be, at clarifying action and character or at controlling the reader's attention and response, heightening his pleasure and understanding. When Bellow is feeling self-indulgent, his language, instead of sharpening effects, distracts the reader, calls attention to the writer and thus away from the story unfolding like a dream in the reader's mind. Fiction should go after understanding by creating characters who subtly embody values and who test them, with clear but inexpressible results, in action. Discursive thought is not fiction's most efficient tool; the interaction of characters is everything. But Bellow can almost never handle more than one character at a time (an exception, perhaps, is his creation of both Humboldt and Citrine in *Humboldt's Gift*), and that one major character, Bellow's surrogate, has always an inordinate love of talk. At every opportunity, Bellow leans his characters and action on some doorframe, turns off his fiction's clock, and from behind the mask of his hero expatiates. When the essay voice begins, we are asked to appreciate, mainly on the basis of the speaker's charm, a set of prejudices and opinions, or shrewd observations—it makes no great difference—that have nothing to do, directly, with the progress of the action or the values under test.

Bellow may sometimes get away with his intrusions, partly because of his comic gift and his gift for finding powerful symbols—



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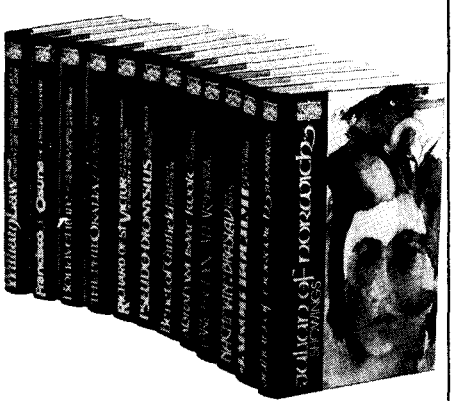

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for instance the symbol of the moral individual buried alive in *Mr. Sammler's Planet*—and also because his opinions often strike the reader as carefully thought out and wise. Certainly his stand is boldly opposed to those trashy popular philosophies we so often encounter in other writers' work—cynical nihilism or the winking, mugging despair of Thomas Pynchon (Bellow counters with a theory of faith and responsible love); self-regarding existentialism (Bellow offers, instead, a theory of universal relatedness in which animals and people have certain common woes); tyrannical Marxism and a whining hatred of "American business" (Bellow offers, instead, a view of people—even naïve Communists and crass business people—as individuals, of suffering as universal and a thing to be dealt with, and of history as a moral search). And it is true, too, that though Bellow's intrusions offend, they nevertheless prove that Bellow can still feel unabashed concern. But the fact remains that his novels come off in the end as sprawling works of advice, not art.

The generous critic might hold up numerous writers as important artists—John Barth, Thomas Pynchon, Joyce Carol Oates, Robert Coover, Donald Barthelme, James Purdy, William Gaddis, John Hawkes, Katherine Anne Porter, Guy Davenport, John Cheever, Bernard Malamud, J. D. Salinger, Eudora Welty, and John Updike, to name a few. How many of them will outlast the century? Perhaps Malamud, certainly a powerful artist at his best; conceivably Guy Davenport, if sheer precision and uncompromising artistry count, but his output is spare and his work goes underadvertised; possibly Eudora Welty, because of one superb novel, *Losing Battles*, a handful of stories, and her secure position as a Southerner and a woman in our college American literature courses; possibly Joyce Carol Oates, for a few excellent short stories; possibly Salinger. But I suspect that the above is a list of inflated reputations. Some on the list will die quickly, of pure meanness—Porter, Coover, and Gaddis—and some will die of intellectual blight, academic narrowness, or fakery—Pynchon and Updike (or most of his work).

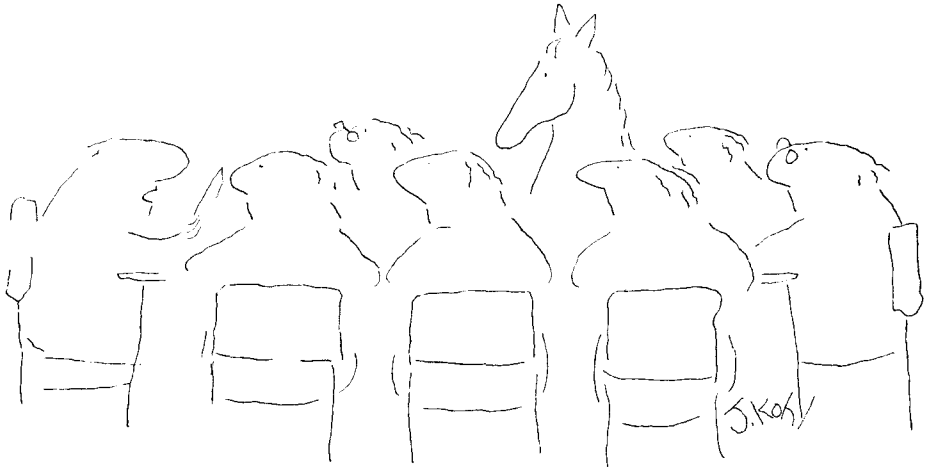
The difference between what merits being called classical prose and the prose of most of our writers is a matter of confidence, of belief. Our more fashionable writers feel, as Chekhov and Tolstoy did not, that their art is unimportant; and they're correct. I have already mentioned one exception, John Fowles. Perhaps there are others. John Cheever's "singing voice," as he puts it—in the short stories that use old-fashioned realism, as in the Wapshot books, and in the more innovative works *Bullet Park* and *Falconer*—is clear and sure, but he's careless about other things. In *Falconer*, for instance, the passages describing Farragut's taking of methadone and his murder of his brother lack authenticity. Despite these slips and others, Cheever's writing has importance: Since he cares about his characters and cares about the reader, his affirmations are sufficiently hard-won to stand up. He qualifies his optimistic Christian vision with the necessary measure of irony (for instance, at the end of *Bullet Park*, where Nailles after saving his son's life is not much better than before); and though Cheever asserts, like any good Christian, that miracles occur, he does not ask us or his characters to count on them. Malamud's affirmations also stand up, and though his novels sometimes sprawl, his control of the emotional material, rooted in concern about his characters' lives, is as sure as Cheever's.

The same cannot be said, it seems to me, of John Updike. He's a master of symbolic complexity, but one can't tell his women apart in a book like *Couples*; his characters' sexual preoccupations, mostly perverse, are too generously indulged; and the disparity between the surface and the subsurface of his novels is treacherous. To the naïve reader, a novel like *A Month of Sundays* seems a merry, bourgeois-pornographic book about a minister who likes copulation, while to the subtler reader of the novel it may seem to be wearily if not ambivalently satirical, a sophisticated attack on false religion. Since the irony—the presumably satiric purpose—is nowhere available on the surface, since the novel can easily be read as a piece of neo-orthodox Presbyterian heresy, one cannot help feeling misgivings about Updike's intent.

His novels, properly understood, may be too much like sermons. No man can serve two masters: the artistic ideal, which makes its premise an essential and radical openness to persuasion, and the religious ideal, which, like Nietzsche's superman, is "deaf to even the best counterarguments." Whether one looks at lowbrow religious artists or at sophisticated highbrows like John Updike, one discovers pretty quickly who's paying them. Religion's chief value is its conservatism: It keeps us in touch with what at least one section of humanity has believed for centuries.

Bernard Malamud has said that great writing leads constantly into surprises and that the writer should be the first one surprised. Updike's surprises, once we've figured out the symbols, are the theological conclusions we should have expected. Yet for all these reservations—and the further reservation that Updike's humor seems to me not funny—I must admit that on a few occasions, especially in *The Centaur*, he proves himself an artist.

But granting the exceptions—Bellow, Malamud, on rare occasions Updike, and no doubt various others—the fact remains that our serious fiction is quite bad. The emphasis among younger artists on surface and novelty of effect is merely symptomatic. The sickness goes deeper, to an almost total loss of faith in—or perhaps understanding of—how true art works. True art, by specific technical means now commonly forgotten, clarifies life, establishes models of human action, casts nets toward the future, carefully judges our right and wrong directions, celebrates and mourns. It does not rant. It does not sneer or giggle in the face of death. It invents prayers and weap-



"The count, Mr. Chairman, is six ayes and one neigh."

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ons. It designs visions worth trying to make fact. It does not whimper or cower or throw up its hands and bat its lashes. It does not make hope contingent on acceptance of some religious theory. It strikes like lightning, or *is* lightning.

We need to stop excusing mediocre and downright pernicious art, stop "taking it for what it's worth" as we take our fast foods, our overpriced cars that are no good, the overpriced houses we spend all our lives fixing, our television programs, our schools thrown up like barricades in the way of young minds, our brainless fat religions, our poisonous air, our incredible cult of sports, and our ritual of fornicating with all strangers. We would not put up with a debauched king, but in a democracy all of us are kings, and we praise debauchery as pluralism.

Art is in one sense Fascist: It claims, on good authority, that some things are healthy for individuals and for society and that some things are not. Unlike the Fascist in uniform, the artist never forces anyone to do anything. He merely makes his case the strongest case possible. He lights up the darkness with a lightning flash, protects his friends the gods—that is, values—and all humanity without exception, and then moves on. ◉

Spies Together

The Human Factor
by Graham Greene
Simon & Schuster, 352 pp., $9.95

Reviewed by Michael Wood

GRAHAM GREENE, along with Somerset Maugham, was the inventor of the modern spy. I suppose I should say they invented the spy in fiction, although by all reports, spies in reality spend a lot of time trying to live up to their literary images. Greene's and Maugham's diffident and lonely men are the heirs of the heroic secret agents of the age of John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915), and in this perspective James Bond begins to look like a romantic flashback, an attempt to revive the grand old days of the empire. "Leamas was not a reflective man," John Le Carré wrote of his *Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, "and not a particularly philosophical one.... He met failure as one day he would probably meet death, with cynical resentment and the courage of a solitary."

Le Carré is perhaps Greene's chief successor on this terrain—although Greene's failing protagonists usually have a shabby, persevering integrity that is the reverse of cynicism and often looks like success. There are also the very good novels of Francis Clifford, of which the best is no doubt *All Men Are Lonely Now* (1967). With Greene's new book, a story of slipping security in a department of British intelligence and of the harsh measures taken to shore it up, the novelist returns so thoroughly to his own turf that he looks for a moment like an imitator of his imitators. The basic situation of *The Human Factor* is the same as that of the Clifford novel I've mentioned: There is a leak of information, and the leak is the hero. But Greene is not really imitating anyone, not even himself.

The subject of espionage has obvious attractions for Greene as a writer, since it offers a world of secrets and betrayals, of imposed silences and illicit talking— "the vision of an endless distrust," as he said in *The Confidential Agent* (1939). It is a theological universe in which rival powers do dirty battle for men's souls. A good number of such souls are lost in no-man's-land, and a curious relativism crops up in the midst of seeming absolutes. Maurice Castle, the hero of *The Human Factor*, unable to talk to the colleagues he is betraying or to the wife he is protecting and unwilling for a while to talk to his Russian contact, steps into a Catholic church and approaches a confessional. The priest asks him rather fiercely why he is not kneeling. "I only want to talk to you," Castle says. "You aren't here to talk to me," the priest replies. "You are here to talk to God." "No, I'm not," Castle says. "I'm just here to talk." Castle's position, that of a decent, uncertain, isolated man committed only to his own complicated loyalties, is central to Greene's fiction. "Who among us," Greene once wrote, "has not committed treason to something or someone more important than a country?"

So far, then, *The Human Factor* continues old themes, although the performance is so fresh and skillful that we can't think even of self-imitation for long. But there is more. There is part of the story of Kim Philby, for example, touched with the brand of sadness that belongs only to Greene. Philby, the head of British anti-Soviet intelligence, turned out to be a lifelong Russian agent and escaped to Moscow in 1963, when he knew he had been discovered. In his introduction to Philby's book, *My Silent War* (1968), Greene describes a visit to Philby's empty house in England: overgrown garden, mail mounting up, milk bottles in the kitchen, a single dirty cup and saucer in the sink. "It was more like an abandoned gypsy encampment than the dwelling of a man with wife and children." In *The Human Factor*, Maurice Castle, his cover blown, sends a prearranged signal and is whisked off to Moscow like Philby, leaving behind a similarly deserted house, with the addition of a half-dead boxer dog in the cellar. Castle has never killed anyone, and he even botches an attempt to shoot the animal before he disappears. Worse, Castle's wife and adopted son are left in England. Both are South African, black, and easily detected; the child has no passport. The vengeful English won't let them go, and the unenthusiastic Russians won't try to get them out. The novel ends with Castle alone in Moscow, hoping but not believing that he will see his family again, locked in a trivial life in a desolate, cold country. He was not Philby, he was not even a Communist. He was merely a man with an exaggerated sense of gratitude.

This is the main subject of the book: A man who is too grateful, who sees all the kindness and help and love he receives as perfectly surprising and perfectly unmerited, who not only will take extraordinary risks to express his thanks but will, Greene suggests, ultimately prefer these debtor's risks to his own distrusted happiness. And so Castle, who has turned traitor out of loyalty to a Communist who has saved his wife's life and out of a conviction, backed by evidence, that England, Germany, and America are planning atrocities in South Africa, knows he is the only possible suspect left in the department, the only person who can be passing on the stray intelligence. But he still makes one last, self-exposing communication—his final sacrifice to a duty that no one has prescribed for him and that only he cares about.

Two other items, apparently at odds, throw further light on Greene's thematic concerns. First, when the leak in the department is detected, there is a more likely suspect than Castle. The suspect is innocent, but his manners are a bit rough—he likes horse racing and port, and he didn't go to Oxford or Cambridge. He is eliminated by his superiors with a clever, casual ruthlessness that makes Le Carré's novels seem to be pulling their punches, and the whole business takes place in a carefully rendered atmosphere of the most civilized,

Michael Wood teaches English at Columbia University and is the author of Stendhal *and* America in the Movies.

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clubby, upper-class English life. No one except an awkward security officer worries much about the mistake. And second, *The Human Factor* is full of references to writers: Castle uses *War and Peace* to give government secrets away; the man killed by mistake marked his copy of Browning with cryptic private allusions to his hopeless love affair; in Russia, Castle is reading Defoe, who was himself a spy.

Official murder and deceptive literature. All sorts of horrors go on behind jolly facades. But all sorts of murky-looking fronts conceal nothing at all. Books may mean what they say, and they may mean lots of other things; in this context, writer and reader become spies together, practicing for their difficult life in the world, juggling their double allegiance to an innocence that is not always an illusion and to a suspicion that is not always justified. ◉

More Passages

The Seasons of a Man's Life
by Daniel J. Levinson with Charlotte B. Darrow, Edward B. Klein, Maria H. Levinson, and Braxton McKee
Knopf, 384 pp., $10.95

Reviewed by
Anthony Astrachan

IN THE MIDDLE of the journey of this life, I sometimes think that one of the things that make the forest dark is this country's obsession with youth. It's not only the advertising and the TV programming. It's the way the work world is still geared to early adulthood although the proportion of its members in their middle age is constantly growing. It's in the way the psychotherapy subculture—important in America far beyond the number of adherents or sects—remains mired in the old Freudian concentration on the span from infancy to adolescence.

So as I come close to the end of what I am told is a "mid-life crisis," I am cheered that we have entered a new age of exploration, discovering the stages of adult growth. Gail Sheehy's 1976 best seller on adult development, *Passages*, put the phrase "mid-life crisis" in everybody's mouth. Now Daniel Levinson, a Yale professor of psychology who directed one of the in-depth studies on which Sheehy based her work, provides a coherent theory of the human life cycle in his book, *The Seasons of a Man's Life*. (Sheehy's other main source, Roger Gould, will publish his *Transformation* this summer.)

The Levinson theory divides the life cycle into five overlapping eras. Childhood and adolescence run from birth to age twenty-two; early adulthood runs from seventeen to forty-five; middle adulthood, from forty to sixty-five; late adulthood, from sixty to eighty-five; and late, late adulthood, from eighty to death.

Each era is marked by periods of stability during which life structures are built. These stable periods alternate with transition periods during which life structures change. The transitions are frequently times of crisis; 80 percent of the forty men who make up Levinson's primary sample went through crises during mid-life transition. "Roger Mohn," for instance, spent his thirties—the stable period of settling down and "becoming one's own man"—working happily, first as head of his company's metals shop and then as the firm's purchasing manager. At forty, he went into mid-life transition with a promotion to head of manufacturing, a job beyond his aspirations and skills. He lost touch with his wife and children, though they supported him when he developed a cancer and was demoted to a position of equal pay but less responsibility. Then Mohn entered middle adulthood, decided to stay in the less challenging job for its security, and spent more time with his family and his fishing.

According to Levinson, the sequence of periods is inescapable: A man cannot go from early adulthood to middle adulthood without passing through the age thirty transition, settling down, and mid-life transition. Levinson defines each period in terms of developmental tasks rather than such concrete events as marriage or retirement. The tasks of settling down, for instance, are to establish one's niche in society (nest-building, pursuing one's interests within a defined pattern) and to work at "making it" (moving upward along a timetable). Developmental tasks may be antithetical. "Floyd Thomas," for example, a black worker, established his niche in society by socializing with "the boys," playing golf, gambling, drinking, and chasing women (though less than he had in his youth). He worked at making it by getting a factory job as a machine operator, becoming a skilled worker, earning promotions, and by sharing two cars, regular vacations, and an increasingly middle-class life-style with his working wife. His contradictory sides "coexisted in an uneasy truce." Later periods

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could integrate or change contradictions in this structure.

Levinson sees three sets of tasks running through the life cycle. The first set deals with the evolution of the life structure—building one, terminating it, exploring the possibilities in both the self and the world for new structures, and building one. The second set deals with forming components of the life structure—a dream, usually of work or love; an occupation; love, marriage, and family; mentoring relationships; and friendships. (On the last, Levinson says, "In our interviews, friendship was largely noticeable by its absence. As a tentative generalization we would say that close friendship with a man or woman is rarely experienced by American men.") The third set of tasks has to do with adult individuation, which Levinson defines as resolving the basic polarities of young/old, destruction/creation, masculine/feminine, and attachment/separateness.

Levinson and his colleagues started their research by studying the lives of 10 men in each of four occupations—hourly paid workers, corporate executives, university biologists, and novelists. They also looked at what they call a "secondary sample" of men whose lives have been portrayed in history and literature—among them Dante (who first painted the mid-life crisis as a dark forest), Shakespeare, Gandhi, Freud, King Lear, and Willy Loman.

The pieces of biography from both samples bring *Seasons* to life. I was fascinated by a new look at Bertrand Russell. He spent the stage of settling down and becoming one's own man writing *Principia Mathematica* with Alfred North Whitehead and living in an emotionally cold, celibate marriage. Then he started his mid-life transition by having an affair with Lady Ottoline Morrell (whose nightgowns he hated) and let World War I shake him out of his prejudices. I was equally fascinated by a much longer biography of novelist "Paul Namson," who spent his thirties in the family stockbrokerage business while writing his first two novels and passed his mid-life transition wandering from university teaching to writing to real estate investment while he fought with his wife. He emerged into middle adulthood with a stronger marriage and a literary career that combined biography with fiction.

The biologists, executives, and workers were just as interesting, but I wanted to know more about the workers. Levinson left me with the disturbing if unsurprising suspicion that workers find it harder to achieve a satisfactory middle-adult life structure than men in better paying and more prestigious occupations.

The biographical sketches in *Seasons* are fuller and more significant than those in Sheehy's *Passages*, but they may seem less pertinent to readers looking for easy identification with their own lives. *Passages* was a frenetic book of many moments, each of them barely anchored by Sheehy's shallower theory but capable of lightning-flash illumination of a reader's experience of his own moments. *Seasons* is a more serene and flowing book that casts a steadier light on the stages of one's own life. I started it convinced that my own life cycle departed often from the norm but finished it abashed to see how closely Levinson's theory fit me.

Seasons is so good that I can only reproach it for not being perfect. Some imperfections are stylistic: The movement back and forth from elaboration of the theory to the biographies that illustrate it is uneven. Some are theoretical: Levinson does not really explain how or why the shift from becoming one's own man (acronymed as BOOM, the boom of the late thirties) to the mid-life transition and its frequent crises takes place. What makes a man give up the stable structure he has struggled to build and start to question his own fundamentals? There is still a lot to learn, as Levinson is the first to admit. He calls his findings hypotheses to be tested, not laws that have been proved.

I think it a pity that Levinson did not study any women. He says that a group of 40 was the largest his team's resources could handle and that a study of 20 men and 20 women would have done justice to neither gender. I must therefore be sorry he could not find resources for a study of 80. Future research will no doubt repair this omission; one doctoral dissertation on women that uses Levinson's theory has already been completed. But the number of places in America where men and women interact is growing, and I hope that future studies of both the male and the female life cycles will take these interactions into account more than Levinson's research was able to do.

The new discoveries about adult development give us a new clarity and a new unity of vision about ourselves that is intellectually and emotionally exciting. Levinson opens a myriad of new insights by compelling us to look at the interrelated-

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Anthony Astrachan, a research associate of the Center for Policy Research, is writing a book on what men feel about the changes that women are making in the lives of both sexes.

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Wit Twister No. 115
Edited by Arthur Swan

The object of the game is to complete the poem by thinking of one word whose letters, when rearranged, will yield the appropriate word for each series of blanks. Each dash within a blank corresponds to a letter of the word. Answers on page 52.

The cheerful ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
___need not bring again
His frosty blocks to these ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___men
Whose ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
projects, as does their stage,
The image of this cold and bloodless age. A.S.

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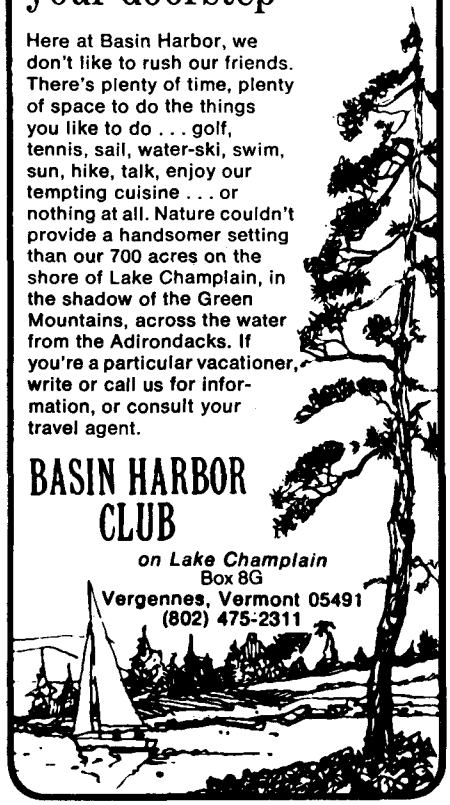

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ness of the biological, psychological, and social elements of the life structure.

This new vision may also enable us to do better at the Sisyphean tasks of organizing our individual lives and our society. The free participation of women in the work world, for instance, turns out to be not only a matter of women's liberation and efficient use of a labor force but also something that can help men resolve the masculine/feminine polarity within themselves, which Levinson sees as one of the main tasks of the mid-life transition.

The Seasons of a Man's Life makes this a good season to learn about our own growth. ◉

Books in Brief

The Theater Essays of Arthur Miller
Edited by Robert A. Martin
Viking, 256 pp., $15

This thick collection of essays, interviews, and journalistic pieces is a book of paradoxes. It is rather startling, for example, to find the author of *Death of a Salesman* complaining about the American "blue play," with its cult of "pathetic defeat," its predictable "documentation of alienated loneliness." No less surprising is Miller's admiration for Ibsen—not for his realism but for his "mysticism." Miller obviously takes seriously his own antideterministic celebration of the unpredictable.

Miller is liveliest in the famous squabble over his "Tragedy and the Common Man" (1949), in which he argues that the modern fear of being displaced has tragic dimensions and that the common man knows this fear best. To the academics' sustained howls of outrage that a tragic hero must have rank and stature, the playwright counters that "there is no more reason for falling down in a faint" before Aristotle's *Poetics* than there is for having one's "illnesses diagnosed by Hippocrates," especially since Aristotle lived in a slave society: "When a vast number of people are divested of alternatives, as slaves are, it is rather inevitable that one will not be able to imagine drama, let alone tragedy, as being possible for any but the higher ranks."

The later essays generally have a sharpness of focus and sophistication that the earlier ones lack. Particularly impressive is the author's foreword, with its attack on the contemporary obsession with irony, the stylized reduction of human suffering to "a groan and a cough." Miller worries in the foreword that he has talked too much over the past 30 years; but the early talk has been highly influential and the recent talk sometimes brilliant.

—JACK SULLIVAN

Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case
by Allen Weinstein
Knopf, 704 pp., $15

The inextricably knotted and twisted strands of evidence pertaining to the Hiss-Chambers imbroglio are as difficult to follow in Professor Allen Weinstein's book as they were when revealed thread by thread during the two years that followed Whittaker Chambers's startling charge against Alger Hiss before the House Un-American Activities Committee, in August 1948. Chambers accused Hiss, then president of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, of acting as a Soviet agent while serving as a second-echelon official in the State Department.

Weinstein has spent more than five years examining all public records, reading all published reports, and interviewing all those who participated, either directly or indirectly, in the case. He even obtained a court order that compelled the government, particularly the FBI, to release previously classified documents. His detectivelike search for the truth has been meticulous and commendable. Though Weinstein at first believed Hiss to be innocent, he ultimately concluded that both Hiss and Chambers had been guilty of perjury.

However, it is regrettable that Weinstein has prematurely yielded to the "rush to press." Someone once observed that if a book is worth printing, it should be worth writing. This is perhaps a harsh judgment, but Weinstein's book is disorganized to the point of shapelessness. In moving from one hearing to another, he repeats testimony, skips back and forth in time, changes focus from Chambers to Hiss, throws in a plethora of unevaluated detail, and devotes too much space to lengthy documentary extracts. *Perjury* is tedious and confusing.

When truth seems to hinge on such unlikely objects as a 1929 Ford with a "sassy little trunk," a prothonotary warbler, Chambers's bad teeth, an Oriental rug, a Woodstock typewriter, and a pumpkin patch —in addition to conflicting testimony by witnesses and politically motivated interrogations—a dexterous hand guided by a commanding point of view becomes a

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clear literary requisite. The late Walter P. Webb always compared the historian's craft to that of the sculptor, who creates his effect as much by the stone he chips away as by that which remains. What few shards Weinstein has chipped away he has carefully gathered in the footnotes and appendixes.

We have waited more than a quarter of a century for this definitive study of the Hiss-Chambers case; we could have waited longer for a work of true literary distinction. —GEORGE H. REEVES

Montgomery Clift: A Biography
by Patricia Bosworth
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 438 pp., $12.95

One of Montgomery Clift's actor friends put it best when he told the author of this biography, "Monty was the first movie star to seem *obsessed*—slightly nuts. There was a tremendous resistance to craziness in the 1950s, and Monty was disturbing—he had an edge." With Marlon Brando and James Dean, Clift made up the triumvirate of actors tortured by introspection and repressed violence, or so it seems in retrospect. In truth, he lacked Brando's and Dean's presence and picked some of his roles carelessly. What's more, his career took a tumble in 1956 when, driving home from a party at Elizabeth Taylor's, he crashed into a telephone pole. Plastic surgery was not able to restore his good looks, and during the last 10 years of his life he was miserable and more insecure. He died at forty-five from a combination of alcohol and pills.

His image and his reality were in open conflict. He was, for one thing, no street punk but a bank president's son raised partly in Europe by an overbearing mother. For another, he was gay. Such factors test a biographer's skill. The first life—*Monty: A Biography of Montgomery Clift*, by Robert Laguardia, which appeared last year—was excessively Freudian. The present one by Patricia Bosworth is level-headed, and its style is more in keeping with the subject. It is, at times, insightful. At one point in the book, someone reflects on *The Misfits*, which was Marilyn Monroe and Clark Gable's last film and Clift's last but one: "Monty and Marilyn were psychic twins," he says. "They were on the same wavelength. They recognized disaster in each other's faces and giggled about it"—which is different from grace under pressure and more fashionable.

—DOUG FETHERLING

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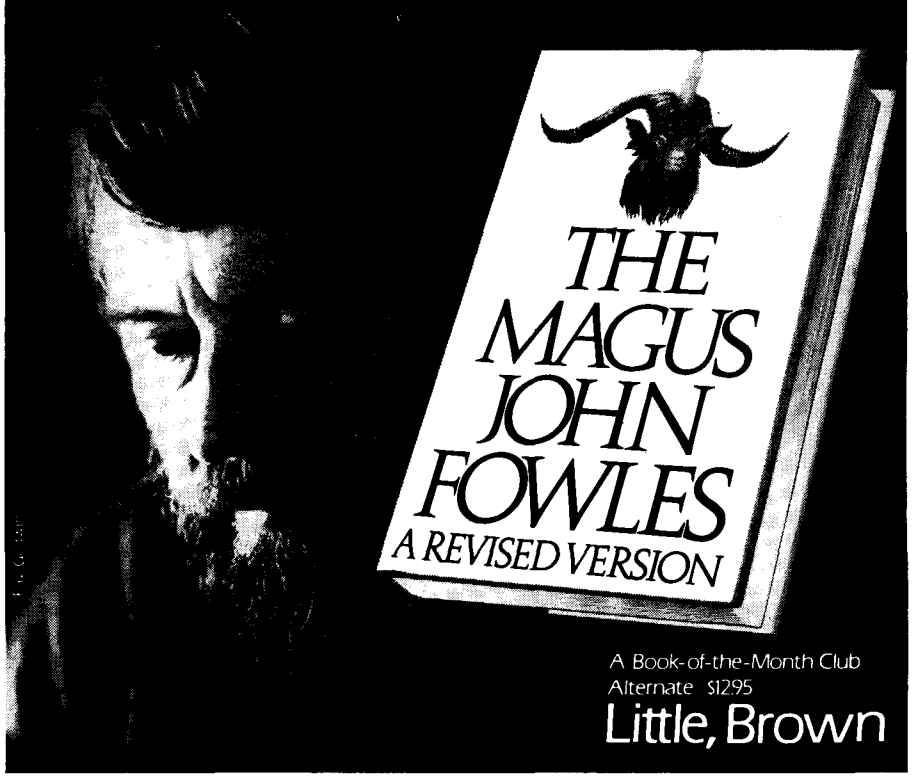

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Fine Print

A Reader's Farrago

by Doris Grumbach

I'VE BEEN READING an interesting farrago of books this fortnight: an absorbing historical novel, a scholarly study of the idea behind the Crusades, a "censored" piece of Lewis Carrollana, and, most appropriately, a book of long short stories published to be read at the end of this cold season.

An Army of Children, by Evan H. Rhodes (Dial, $9.95), is a very long, well-crafted, fictionalized account of the early thirteenth-century children's crusade that ended in tragedy. Rhodes has apparently done much careful research on the subject—even walked the route that the army of 20,000 children took over the Alps and through the Sinai toward Jerusalem.

He has created an engaging group of children as his heroes and heroine: the English boy Roger, the Jewish refugee Jonathan, and Laurelle, the girl they both love. The villain, Frizio, is as evil as a proper villain should be: Supposedly taking the children to Jerusalem on his ship, Frizio rapes Laurelle and then sells all the children he has on board into slavery. Only Jonathan of all the children we see in the book comes unscathed to Jerusalem, having saved the blinded Roger and helped to destroy Frizio. Jonathan, relying always on himself rather than on the promises made to the children by self-proclaimed witnesses to God's word, comes home at last to the "scarred-out immutable monument of the Wailing Wall."

One of the delights for me of reading historical fiction is that if the story goes on long enough and is detailed enough, I feel as though I am living in its pages. I found just such pleasure in *An Army of Children*. There is a long residence in its pages, during the wearisome march and then on the sail toward the Holy Land with the children who believe God has told them to free Jerusalem from the Moslems. We are with them, battling and bleeding, starving and suffering at their sides. We endure with the 200 children who reach Jerusalem (the others starve, die violently, turn back, or are captured into slavery). When Laurelle dies we find ourselves crying with Roger and Jonathan for their dream: "They cried for all the things that heaven had not allowed, and when they thought there were no more tears left, they cried for the cruel cheat that was life itself."

A novel such as *An Army of Children* arouses one's curiosity about crusades in general. Fortunately, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, Carl Erdmann's classic work, which first appeared in 1935, has recently been published by Princeton University Press ($28.50) in a new and well-translated edition. It is an example of fine scholarship. His theory is that the Crusades were not another form of pilgrimage, as some scholars believe, but the result of a complex interplay of the idea of Christian knighthood, papal encouragement of the idea of a holy war against the Moslems, and other sociological conditions in England and western Europe in the eleventh century. I do this beautiful piece of historical and cultural research an injustice by summarizing it so insufficiently. But if you find Rhodes's novel intriguing, you might want to know more about how the phenomenon of crusade started.

A few weeks ago [*SR*, February 4], I mentioned in this column a good small press in New York City, the Angelica Press. I have just seen its latest book, a beautifully produced volume that will interest any lover of Lewis Carroll's work. *The Wasp in a Wig* ($10) was published for the Lewis Carroll Society of North America in a limited edition of 750 copies. It contains an episode from *Through the Looking Glass* that had long been lost. When Carroll sent a portion of chapter eight to his illustrator, John Tenniel, Tenniel wrote back saying, "I can't see my way to a picture" of the elderly wasp in a wig, and Carroll decided to exclude that episode from the chapter. *The Wasp in a Wig* contains a facsimile of this letter as well as the suppressed galleys, corrected in Carroll's handwriting. I agree with Martin Gardner, who writes in the preface that the episode is better than Tenniel thought. And his theory that *The Wasp* may be a parody of Carroll as he would appear 40 years later is an interesting one. Gardner writes, "It seems to me Carroll could not have written this episode without being acutely aware of the fact that the chasm of age between Alice and the Wasp resembled the chasm that separated Alice Liddell from the middle-aged teller of the story."

A charming "found" piece, *The Wasp* is embedded in a finely made book.

In 1955, Macmillan of London started a brave publishing venture—an annual volume of long short stories (then as now considered an unfashionable idea) called *Winter's Tales*—on the theory, presumably, that the long winter season was suitable for such entertainment. Tactfully arranged in alphabetical order, the 12 stories in the first volume were by such notable English writers as Kingsley Amis, Pamela Hansford Johnson, Frank O'Connor, V. S. Pritchett, and Osbert Sitwell. Each story was illustrated by a different artist.

As early as 1959, St. Martin's Press began to publish the readable collections in this country. Laudably, that press is still at it: I have just read through (in one winter's evening) *Winter's Tales 23*, edited by Peter Collenette (the regular editor for many years has been Alan Maclean).

In the old days, Macmillan inserted a postcard in the book, asking readers to let the publisher know which story they liked best. The winner would be announced in a subsequent volume's preface—a custom, I gather, that has been abandoned. But were I asked, I would say that this, alas, is not a vintage year: None of the eight stories collected this year, including Fay Weldon's mildly humorous "Alopecia," seems distinguished. But no matter: There's always next year, when *Winter's Tales 24* will be upon us with the promise of more and, hopefully, better stories—like Patrick White's excellent novella "A Woman's Hand" (in the 1955 volume) and Muriel Spark's "Bang-Bang You're Dead" (in the 1958 volume). ◉

Answer to Middleton Double-Crostic No. 143

Sidney Lens:

(The) Day Before Doomsday

Early in the Cold War... Senator ... Vandenberg expressed the opinion that if the United States was not to be diverted from preparedness, it was necessary "to scare the hell out of the country." The intelligentsia identified with the arms race do just that.

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Trade Winds

by William Cole

Short, Strong, and Bitter

Every once in a while a startling new poet inexplicably appears. That's how it is in poetry, and that's just what happened when thirty-year-old Lauren Shakely, heretofore published in only a few literary magazines, copped the desirable 1977 Walt Whitman Award of the Academy of American Poets given each year for a first book. The poems in *Guilty Bystander* (Random House, $8.95 cloth, $4.95 paper) were referred to by the competition's judge, Diane Wakoski, who chose the book from among 1,600 submissions, as "not pleasant or easy or always even attractive. But they give you a poet who refuses to accept the truth from any source but her own probing perceptions." The poems are short, strong, and bitter. "Against Life" is a good example:

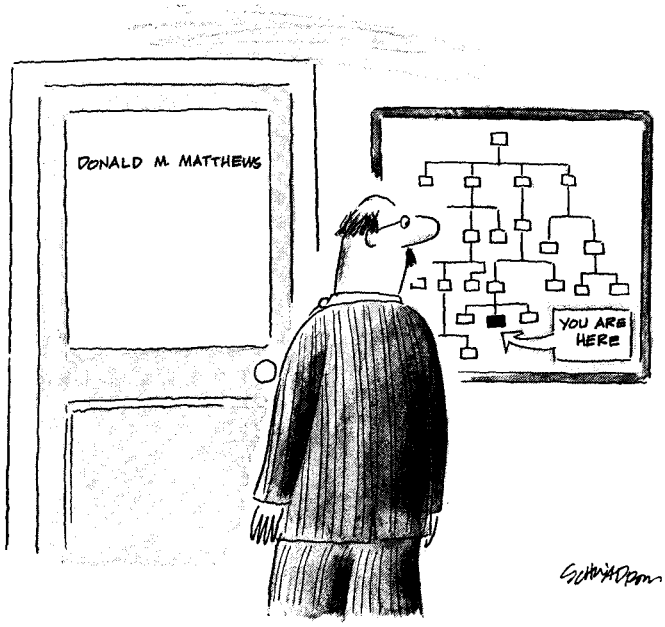
From the first moment,
struggling along the dark canal,
a ring of muscles presses you
rhythmically on.
"Leave me alone," you want to scream.
Nevertheless you
break the surface,
a swimmer forced by biology
to take the air.

My friends at the beach
submerge into wave after wave,
yell to me alone on shore
about the joy of it.
But I hate water.
I know what it leads to.
And there is nothing in this life
that could compel me
to be born into it again.

They Still Love Him

As a knee jerk liberal, I am of two minds about Cuba: I applaud the accomplishments of Castro's revolution but am uneasy about the absence of civil liberties. It was a gorgeously romantic revolution, in which Castro, to quote one of his aides, showed "audacity, style, imagination"—qualities that are still on view, according to photojournalist Fred Ward's *Inside Cuba Today* (Crown, $10). Castro brought nine-and-a-half-million people who had been under a corrupt dictatorship to full employment and provided new housing, new industry, and a strong educational system. Nobody's poor, but then again, nobody's rich. No gambling, no prostitution, and very little black marketeering. When Cubans complain, it's usually about shortages: meat, clothing, cosmetics, modern appliances. Even, to take a trivial example:

Toilet seats are among the most elusive items in the country. Upon leaving a major hotel, the visitor is unlikely to see one until he reaches another hotel. It seems Cubans have stood on them for years and broken the old ones, and since toilets were originally from the United States and the embargo prohibits any trade, no replacements ever came. Similarly, toilet paper and napkins are usually seen only in good hotels and restaurants. Sometimes supermarkets are without toilet tissue for months. No one can ever explain its absence.



The incessant propaganda is certainly unpleasant, but it hasn't turned the people off their government. They still love Fidel. This seems to me a fair-minded picture (and the photos are fine) of a country where, in domestic affairs at least, the good far overshadows the bad.

Postwar Paris

You wouldn't think that a book about researching Proust's letters would be much fun, but *Other People's Letters: A Memoir*, by Mina Curtiss (Houghton Mifflin, $9.95), certainly is. Curtiss, now in her eighties, went to Paris in 1947 to gather material about Proust from his faithful housekeeper and surviving friends, most of whom were aristocrats. Curtiss's most amusing encounter was with the lecherous Rumanian prince Antoine Bibesco: "For a man who must have lied fairly consistently for nearly twenty years (by profession he used to be a diplomat), he does it with such admirably transparent charm." A large part of the book draws on Curtiss's own letters and journals of that time, to which she has added "Afterthoughts" from 1977. There are many passages like this:

Saturday is a wonderful day to lunch out alone in Paris because almost all the other lunchers are people in love. Last week at the place I went they were all middle-aged businessmen with their *midinette* mistresses barely able to get through their lunch in their eagerness for bed.

A civilized, delightful woman, Mina Curtiss. As is her book.

Know Anything Remarkable?

Author John Train is still sifting through the 500 submissions of remarkable names that were drawn by my item "Ycleptomania" [*SR*, December 10, 1977], and a report on the wildest ones will soon appear in this column. In the meanwhile, Train is embarking on another book, *Remarkable Occurrences* (to be published by Potter/Crown), and will eventually send a free, autographed copy of that book to any reader who sends in a usable occurrence—meaning a strange coincidence, a weird statistic, or a bizarre situation. For instance: An English airman blown out of his bomber without a parachute at 18,000 feet fell into 18 inches of snow and was unharmed. Or the fact that in 1895 there were only two cars in Ohio. They collided. Or the story of an eighty-two-year-old Long Island man who was sentenced to jail for strangling his seventy-six-year-old wife, whom he accused of adultery. True stuff, from news stories, historical accounts, or reliable word of mouth. Don't make 'em up. Send 'em in. ◉

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A Night Full of Rain and Boredom

A Night Full of Rain—*"Injecting mystery into an otherwise banal scene."*

by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

CAN A BEAUTIFUL blonde rich American feminist find happiness with a dark bearded Communist Italian male chauvinist? This is the weighty problem to which Lina Wertmuller addresses herself in *The End of the World in our Usual Bed in a Night Full of Rain* (Warner Bros.).

Lizzy, an American girl who innocently interferes in an Italian religious festival, is rescued from an angry mob by Paolo, a Communist journalist. He then tries to rape her in an abandoned monastery. They meet again in San Francisco. He pursues her. It rains. They marry and live in Rome. He has the Italian view that the obligation of women is to minister to men. She has the American view that the obligation of women is to assert their own identity. Ten years pass. They fight. It rains. It is always raining in the film. They run angrily into the rain and get very wet. They return to their bed. Their hair is miraculously dry. Outside it rains.

Lizzy and Paolo are the only operative characters. There is, in addition, a chorus of "friends," who look like extras left over from Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*. Their faces materialize in the bedroom, leering, jeering, or sneering at the action. Heaven knows what point they are intended to make, except to fill up lacunae in the narrative and to underline the already obvious conflicts between the couple. What the chorus really underlines is the insufferable portentousness of the movie. Everything about it is portentous—from the title (and the titles) on. Wertmuller is a master (mistress?) of the meaningful meaningless shot, the lingering pause of the camera designed to inject mystery into an otherwise banal scene. Contemporary political references—Berlinguer, Calley, ecology, and so on—are inserted in the same quest for higher significance.

She is above all a master of self-publicity. She accompanied her film to New York and titillated interviewers with gnomic utterances. Rain, she confided to Mr. Tallmer of the *New York Post*, is "a symbol of change. Maybe the death. Maybe the life. Finish one world but beginning another." Move over, Rod McKuen. "This is the most political movie I ever made," she told Mr. Gussow of *The New York Times*, adding that this was her first movie "that was not grotesque"—wrong, I believe, on both counts: *A Night Full of Rain* is *not* political and *is* grotesque.

I know some regard her as an inspired director. She has a dash and boldness that can fill the screen with excitement for a moment or two. She uses music well. Perhaps it is hard for Americans to do justice to her, for she is so clearly responding to the specific cultural pressures of her own distraught country. She sees herself, I would guess, as both a Marxist and a feminist; and the fact that the Communists she knows are evidently male chauvinist pigs imparts a strong love-hate tension to her reports on contemporary life. But the only part of her Marxism that comes over effectively in this movie is her anti-Americanism; and, as for her feminism, "she's not a feminist in any sense that we know," her star, Candice Bergen, told Mr. Reed of *The New York Daily News*. "Italian feminism is archaic and outdated by ten years.... Some of the original lines were things we were saying in America seven years ago, and they just seemed ludicrous." The lines that survived seem ludicrous too.

Candice Bergen is a delectable as well as an intelligent woman. One can only conclude that Wertmuller decided to do her in. "I never felt she liked me," Bergen said afterward. She is clearly right. The part is humiliating; and the actress is required not only to demean herself physically but to recite, it would seem, every cliché in the English language. On top of that, she is photographed as unflatteringly as possible, which in her case requires considerable effort and ingenuity. One feels that Wertmuller must be a male chauvinist pig herself. Giancarlo Giannini, Wertmuller's favorite actor, has the other role. He gets more pleased with himself with each new film. In this one, playing what is apparently intended as a man of irresistible charm, he is likely to strike viewers less infatuated than Wertmuller or himself as a complacent ass.

A Night Full of Rain, in short, seems to me silly, boring, and phony. There is some nice pastel cinematography by Giuseppe Rotunno. ◉

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'We're looking for people who want to earn money writing children's stories'

'Don't believe for one second that writing for children is a snap,' says the author of 53 children's books. 'Still, it may be the straightest possible line between you and a publisher's check — if you're qualified to seek success in this rewarding field.'

By Alvin Tresselt, Dean of Faculty

If you want to write and get paid for it, I can't think of a better way to do it than writing books and stories for children and teenagers. Ideas flow naturally right out of your own life experience. While it's still a challenge, the odds of getting that first unforgettable check from a juvenile publisher are better than they are from just about any other kind of publisher I know.

Later on, you may get other checks from other publishers. But right now, the object is to begin — to break into print — to learn the feeling of writing and selling your work and seeing your name in type. After that, you can decide if you want your writing to take another direction.

But after 30 years of editing, publishing, and teaching — and 53 books — I can tell you this: you'll go a long way before you discover anything as rewarding as writing for young readers.

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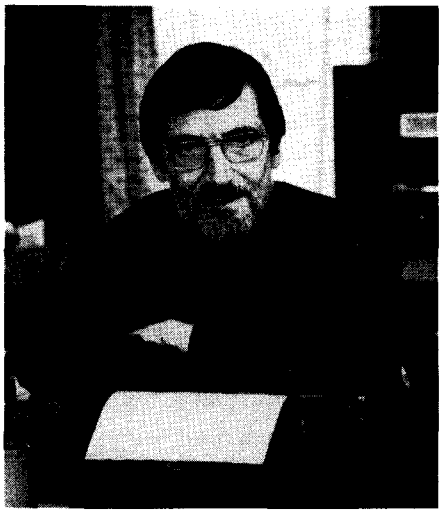

Alvin Tresselt was executive editor of Parent's Magazine Press, the first editor of *Humpty Dumpty's Magazine for Children*, and has served on the board of the Author's Guild. He is now Dean of Faculty at The Institute of Children's Literature.

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Television

The Beast in the Box

by Karl E. Meyer

WHEN IT COMES to television, we are all guinea pigs in a living room laboratory. Just suppose that television turned out to be the cultural equivalent of lung cancer, its pulsing electrons deadly to the values of democracy and to the power of reason. By the time we found out what was happening, it would be too late to summon the doctor because we would all be stricken in the same cancer ward.

These (no doubt) excessively gloomy reflections are prompted by two new books intended as an early warning of possible malignancy. Jerry Mander's *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* (Morrow, $11.95) makes no claim to balance. A former adman turned Sierra Club publicist, Mander regards television as a monstrous child of technology incapable of serving civilized ends.

Only a little less vehement is *Remote Control: Television and the Manipulation of American Life* (Times Books, $15), by Frank Mankiewicz and Joel Swerdlow. (Mankiewicz, the president of National Public Radio, was George McGovern's campaign director in 1972, and Swerdlow is a young free-lancer.) In their view, American television is an evil only marginally redeemed by its blunted promise. But the authors propose no cures and close on a note of unqualified despair.

Where both books strike home, however, is in the amount of information they amass about the pervasive influence of the box. Television is different in kind from any other medium of communication. It is a baby-sitter, a tutor, and an insidious huckster; it colonizes our minds with images and is as addictive as heroin; it creates its own mesmeric reality and alters our attention span and even our ability to absorb the written word.

So real is television, writes Mander, that no less than 250,000 Americans have written to Dr. Marcus Welby, seeking medical advice, as if he were an actual physician. According to Mankiewicz and Swerdlow, *Kojak* and *Police Story* have turned cops into actors. The authors write:

> Police detectives across America are drawing chalk lines around the body on the floor, taking endless photographs at the scene of the crime, dusting for fingerprints, showing pictures of suspects to the victims ... all because over the past two decades Americans have seen police do this on television and will not be content until police do it in real life.

Television supplants parental authority and may indeed be undermining the family itself. The same authors cite the results of a two-year study in which a college researcher asked children aged four to six, "Which do you like better, TV or Daddy?" Forty-four percent said they preferred television. (In 1976, Chicago police entered an apartment in which a father had been murdered by a burglar 10 hours before; they were shocked to discover three children watching television while the father's bloodied body lay a few feet away.)

Given the verifiable facts about television's influence, the dearth of basic research about its impact is appalling. Mander is particularly good on this point. The UCLA biomedical library has a computer that can scan the half-million treatises on neuroscience published since 1969. The machine could locate only 78 items dealing with our neurophysiological response to television (by comparison, a thousand items are published annually on sleep and dreaming). Mander hired a researcher to check *Psychological Abstracts* all the way back to 1940; this search yielded nine additional references.

Does television dim the mind and induce a kind of hypnotic trance? How much do we *really* remember about the programs we see? Is the artificial light that television drills into our eyeballs causing irreparable damage? To these and other disturbing questions the answer must be that we don't know. The existing scientific literature is sufficient only to suggest that the questions demand full-scale inquiry.

(On the question of memory, a poll found that more than 70 percent of the American people believe they saw the assassination of John F. Kennedy on television in 1963. In fact, nobody saw it live on television, and it was not until 1976 that a closely edited portion of the Zapruder film, showing the actual murder, was broadcast.)

Messrs. Mander, Mankiewicz, and Swerdlow are plainly witnesses for the prosecution, and before a verdict can be reached the jury must hear both sides. Neither book, for example, discusses the beneficial effects of television in relieving the boredom and sense of isolation among aging Americans. For millions of viewers, television is literally a window onto the world of ideas and events that would otherwise be inaccessible. For those who are geographically remote, television fulfills the same positive purpose.

Moreover, television may enrich the nonverbal perception of preschool age youngsters. Mankiewicz and Swerdlow do allude to the Brookline Early Education Project, which since 1972 has examined learning patterns in the vital preschool years. According to this study, a rise in the intelligence quotients of preschoolers in Brookline, Massachusetts, seems to be the result of television watching. But, significantly, the study also indicates that the benefits of television may be exclusively confined to the preschool years.

At every point, we are confronted by a paucity of information. Aside from the famous, and controversial, 1972 study on the impact of television violence—which was carried out by the National Institute of Mental Health at a cost of $1.5 million—we have had no studies of TV comparable to the kind of scientific research devoted to cancer. If I were a member of Congress, I would cry havoc, because in the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed monster rules.

My own tentative judgment is that all three authors have been conditioned by American television. I do not think they would have arrived at the same conclusions in Great Britain, where public television is dominant and even commercial broadcasting is comparatively more benign. The tragedy is that in the United States we have given control of an incomparably influential medium to those whose final commitment is to the network profit line. It is rather like turning over a nuclear weapon to a teen-age gang.

Lacking scientific research, we rely on journalists to tell us about the effects of television. None is more knowing than Les Brown, of *The New York Times*, who reports truthfully and succinctly about the beast in the box. It gives me pleasure to call attention to Brown's *The New York Times Encyclopedia of Television* (Times Books, $20), which will, I am certain, acquire gospel authority as a source of facts about the most troublesome communications system ever devised. ◉

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Popular Music

Bone-dry in the '70s

by Barry Gewen

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, André Hodeir, an eminent French jazz critic, observed that the music he loved seemed to have retraced in 50 years the path that European classical music had required 10 centuries to cover—the path of birth, development, maturity, and decline. These days, a stroll through a record store or a twist of the radio dial (AM or FM, it no longer matters which) brings similar thoughts to mind about rock music—except that rock's life cycle seems to have been only half as long as that of jazz. Music—at least popular music—is in a sorry, and possibly terminal, state.

This, of course, is not the first time that American pop music has slumped. Rock itself arose during a lull in the early Fifties. At that time jazz had turned into an exclusive club, practically Ptolemaic in its structure of circles within circles: white cultists on the outer rim, contemptuous of the straight majority that had given its heart to Eisenhower; black hipsters in the second circle, mutely disdainful of the white hangers-on; and jazzmen at the cool-blue center, scorning everything but the Inner Voice and showing what they felt for their fans by playing concerts with their backs to the audience. The "Top 40," meanwhile, contented itself with the musical dregs of a flabby Broadway—which had not yet given itself over to live sex shows—performed by a colorless parade of Perrys and Pattis and Eddies and Tonys and Rosemarys. Then Elvis arrived, and "How Much Is That Doggie in the Window?" was never heard from again.

A second dry spell began around 1959 and lasted until the arrival of the Beatles at the end of 1963. Rock 'n' roll, which for five years had overwhelmed everything in sight, lost its vitality at the end of the decade and sought sustenance in the weighty issues of high school proms, teachers' pets, and acne control. One by one, the music's luminaries passed from the scene: Buddy Holly died in a plane crash; Chuck Berry was sent up on a morals charge; Little Richard entered the ministry; Frankie Lymon drifted into drugs and self-destruction; Elvis himself went into the army and came out with more than his hair cut off. At the same time, the vultures descended—modern-day alchemists who turned plastic into gold by means of fabricated talents like Frankie Avalon and Fabian. Commercialism and cynicism did their worst, and for four years the people dwelt in darkness—until Britain sent a great light.

The music entered a slough for the third time about 1968, and it is one that we are still wading through. The strongest indication of a decline from the rock heights of the mid-Sixties was, obviously, the breakup of the Beatles in 1970, but before that explosion there had occurred the eerily appropriate death of Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, two performers who had specialized in a kind of demonic abandon and whose end seemed to mark a certain drawing of limits. There had been, as well, the ugliness and violence of Altamount, after which, consciously or unconsciously, Mick Jagger's satanic majesty transmuted into an androgynous theatricality that spawned a legion of disingenuous transvestites, the pop heroes of teen-agers who in the Seventies have made a style out of decadence. And following the Beatles' demise, there was Don McLean's "American Pie"—probably the best song of 1972 and certainly the most important of that year and possibly of the entire decade—which lamented the death of rock music and signaled the onset of a sensibility that continues to prevail in pop music, a sensibility that withdraws from immediate experience into nostalgia and sentimentality. McLean himself has gone on to become one of the leading members of this school, whose king is John Denver.

Commercial black music, no less than white, has fallen on hard times. Dominated now as it was in the Sixties by the Motown sound, it has taken the virtues of the original Motown style and refined them into the rude and mindless thumpety-thump of disco. Not since the days of Fabian has any music been so wholly the product of businessmen.

What distinguishes the present situation from the two previous lulls, however, and what suggests a terminal condition is its peculiar "no exit" quality: For nine years pop music has been wandering in a desert with no relief in sight. In the early Fifties, though you never would have guessed it from watching Lucky Strike's *Your Hit Parade*, interesting musical developments were taking place around the country—rhythm and blues in Chicago, country and western up from the South. Similarly, in the depths of the early Sixties doldrums, one could, if one looked, find a number of bright spots, harbingers of things to come—the beginnings of Motown; the folk music revival that first brought the Kingston Trio and Peter, Paul, and Mary to prominence and that later produced Bob Dylan. But today, in rock music, a wasteland of gaudy hard rock, insipid disco, and mushy sentimentality stretches as far as the eye can see.

How can this be changed? In two ways, it seems to me. The first is to try to reestablish a unity in music, to draw connections between rock music, jazz, and the Western classical tradition. Insofar as this has been attempted by contemporary musicians, it has usually resulted in monstrosities like rock versions of Mozart's G-minor symphony, aggression rather than art. All such efforts are doomed to eclecticism at best because common intellectual and spiritual ground simply does not exist. To create it at present is probably more a job for music teachers than for musicians, but once it is established, the musicians may be able to draw authentically on sources from the past to create popular music in the present.

A second approach would be to reach out to international sources. Jamaican reggae has already had a healthy impact on music in this country, but how many people here know that traditional Celtic music is undergoing a revival in Ireland and in Brittany, that Mikis Theodorakis has revolutionized Greek popular music, that a new song movement was developing in Chile with the music of Violeta Parra and Victor Jara before it was cut short by the coup? The French buy Woody Guthrie records. The Japanese listen to bluegrass. Probably no major country in the world is as isolated musically as is the United States, and if our popular music in the past was able to draw upon itself for vitality and innovation, it may now be time for us to stop listening only to ourselves (or close musical neighbors like England) and to open our ears to other people and other traditions. ◉

Barry Gewen is a free-lance writer living in New York City.

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Theater

When Theaters Collide

by Martin Gottfried

THERE IS A WAR going on between two small theaters in the Chelsea area of Manhattan, and it is an interesting skirmish of social and theatrical significance. Chelsea is bounded, roughly, by Fourteenth Street, Thirty-second Street, Eighth Avenue, and the Hudson River. It is a residential community, not an entertainment area.

Thirteen years ago, a director named Gene Feist noticed something very interesting about Chelsea: Twenty-sixth Street, between Eighth and Ninth avenues, runs right through the middle of two giant housing developments. One in particular seemed a plum, having nearly 3,000 apartments for the prime theatergoing group: middle-income New Yorkers.

It occurred to Feist that a theater on this street could draw from the more than 8,000 adults living within two or three city blocks, so he converted a store basement on Twenty-sixth Street into a comfortable arena and proceeded to create one of New York's most peculiar theaters. The Roundabout Theatre, as he called it, has never been very good by any reasonable definition of the term, and not even experience or success has been able to daunt its resolute amateurism. Yet, uncannily, Feist's play choices have complemented this amateurism. Roundabout has somehow managed to come up with the second-best plays of the second-rate classic playwrights: Ferenc Molnar's *The Play's the Thing*, James Barrie's *What Every Woman Knows*, Booth Tarkington's *Clarence*. Sometimes, perhaps accidentally, the theater would do a first-rate playwright's second-class work, such as Shaw's *The Philanderer*. In mounting these oddities, Feist festooned them with broad direction and costumes prone to misfit. All of this made for an ingenuous perversity, a seedy charm. For these aren't *awful* plays. They are curiosities, substandard classics we'd simply never have a chance to see. Who would ever revive them with so many major works still waiting to be done?

Such plays worked at Roundabout, but Feist slipped in two ways: He tried to do plays that were actually good (Chekhov, Strindberg, Anouilh, even Shakespeare), and he expanded his theater to include a former movie house with a stage the size of a Munchkin's football field. Producing on that big stage cost his company a fortune.

A young Californian named Craig Anderson saw his opportunity. Anderson had duly served his apprenticeship with various regional theaters. Now looking to start a place of his own, he found one just a few doors down from the Roundabout—the comfortable little Hudson Guild Theatre, which, being a part of the Hudson Guild Neighborhood House, had financial advantages of its own. There, three years ago, he began a program of new plays and revivals.

I'd call Anderson a hustler in the best sense of the word, but many people don't think there is even a good sense of that word. Yet hustling (street sense?) is necessary to survival in the chancy world of subsidized institutional theater. Let's say Anderson knows what he is doing. Within a year he was getting major directors to stage major actors in strong and interesting plays, some of them New York premieres. He found new plays by established playwrights; plays that had been overlooked or rejected by his richer competitors; such plays as Christopher Hampton's *Savages* and *Treats* and Simon Gray's *Molly*. Anderson also realized that many established actors would work for reasonable salaries if a play were challenging; if its run were limited to four weeks; and if it were presented in New York.

So Roundabout, having innovated professional community theater in New York, now finds itself competing for the very territory it discovered. Whether it can weather the competition remains to be seen. Recently, while Anderson was doing *Molly* at his Hudson Guild, Roundabout was doing *Othello*. How did things work out? Predictably. As directed by Feist, Roundabout's *Othello* is the company's usual performance when taken unawares by a good play—it is Beethoven as played by a street-corner band. Earle Hyman has spent a career playing the Moor and is just plain tired of it. For unknown reasons, Feist cast Carmen de Lavallade, a talented black actress, as Iago's wife, Emilia. He probably thought this would emphasize Iago's fear that she had slept with Othello, but considering the play's racial allusions to Othello, the casting of a black Emilia makes no sense. This is typical of Roundabout's inability to think conceptual problems through.

Molly is a new-old play by Gray, who, as the author of *Butley* and *Otherwise Engaged*, is one of the hotter contemporary British stage writers. *Molly* was written 10 years ago for television and recently revised. It is a soap opera: The title character is a charming and clever woman who married an older man for his money. She loves him but not quite as lustily as she loves the new chauffeur, best described as a "country lout," since we are in *Chatterley* country. There is an inevitable murder (inevitable whenever we're in soapland).

One can well understand the failure of *Molly* to find a major New York production, and yet it is a treat for Hudson Guild subscribers. Particularly as played by the experienced and classy Tammy Grimes, the character of Molly is a female equivalent of Gray's familiar sardonic and witty heroes. She is continuously funny, and, what's more, the play has energy and interest. The directing and acting are crisp and thoroughly professional. So, the Hudson Guild Theatre is shooting for the young, smart, and knowledgeable theatergoing crowd, while the Roundabout is trying to keep its older, more conservative audience. People, however, are not so easily classified, and 8,000 adults in the neighborhood may not be enough to keep both theaters going. Whether Feist's war-horse and appealingly ingenuous programming can withstand the challenge of Anderson's professionalism and brightness actually mirrors a struggle going on not only in theaters everywhere but around us generally—cool newcomers trying to take things over from a befuddled majority. That is why it is interesting. ◉

Fraser Young
Literary Crypt No. 104

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. *Answer on page 53.*

W Q E E X N Y W K Z A N
I E K D V H E K Z D E W
H W U D V W U Q E E X
W X L A Y Z .

— Z . I . V E I Z

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Booked for Travel

Droshkys, Taxis, and Hacks

by Horace Sutton

THE URBAN TRAVELER abroad in New York knows that to launch one's self inside a taxi—unless it is a Checker—requires the stance and propelling motion assumed by fullbacks striving for a first down when the situation is third and one. Having successfully flagged a cabby who does not present a prospective fare with a questionnaire before admitting him to the sodden floor of the rolling cell that is the back seat of most New York taxis, the rider, if male, must assume a modified fetal position and propel himself shoulders first. Women with tight skirts are required to edge toward the seat posterior first, and once contact is made, swing the knees about. Should the person be tall, knees must be tucked under chin. This is a highly delicate maneuver when executed in winter and in spring, when the streets are full of slush and the distance over the flooded gutter between sidewalk and cab seat can be a chasm of several feet. As with the famous third hole at Mauna Kea, it is a launch that must carry overwater to be successful.

The day of the garrulous, begrudgingly affable cabdriver seems to be disappearing in New York. Those who occupy the driver's seat these days are surly Yugoslavs, Chinese with inscrutable accents, and, unaccountably, newly liberated Russians. One émigré from Soviet Georgia recently awarded me with a polemic on the shortfalls of democracy and on why certain blacks and Hispanics he had encountered in the city would be straightened out in his country with a few reconstructive years in Siberia.

Boston cabs that wait for the Amtrak trains at Back Bay Station are a raffish lot, and one never knows whether the fare has been determined by the meter or the immediate needs of the cabby. Yet the drivers there are agreeable enough, and when one got out of his cab to carry my bag into the hotel lobby the other day—a practice that ceased in New York about the time of McKinley—I found myself in a state approaching cardiogenic shock.

It is well known that Tokyo taxi drivers are orderly, line up obediently at hotels, and rocket about the city at mad speeds as if compensating for the circumstances of peace that have eliminated the need to recruit kamikaze pilots. European travelers are aware that Paris taxi drivers smoke Gauloises in the corner of the mouth, park in the middle of the broad boulevards, and don't like to be engaged for journeys that will interfere with lunch. Madrid taxis cluster about hotel entrances at midday and disappear from the streets after midnight, when—considering the meal hours in Spain—one desperately needs them. Brussels cabdrivers take out their own tips and win the Global Contentiousness Award for being the surliest.

THAT LEAVES LONDON. Ah, how civilized. The driver sits up front, glass-enclosed. There is space alongside him for bag and baggage. There is room in the tonneau for five, with two on jump seats. The cabs turn on a 10 pence, and considering the ample height of the vehicle, it isn't altogether necessary to roll one's body into a ball in order to gain entrance.

Some 35 London cabbies have taken graduate studies, emerging as professional guides. They are entitled to wear the London Tourist Board's oval blue shield with "Registered Guide" embossed thereon. Using their regular taxis, these cabby-guides offer such elaborate cab rides as a full seven-hour tour of Windsor and of Hampton Court, a half-day cruise about London, a full-day visit to Stratford, a day's ride rolling through the cathedral towns of Winchester and Salisbury, with a look at Salisbury Plain and Stonehenge.

While in London not long ago, I rode off with Alan Gale, a certified registered guide, and a London cabby as well, in search not of Westminster Abbey and all that but of the East End, an earthy neighborhood that is always home to London's newest immigrants and that still steams with tales of Jack the Ripper, who performed his evil deeds within its precincts. Gale, who pronounces his name "gyle," in cockney fashion, was particularly suited to that exploration since he lived in Whitechapel, where his grandfather began life as a fish-and-chips runner.

The East End was a convenient quarter for new arrivals (as the Lower East Side was to immigrants put ashore in lower New York) because the quays were nearby. Most arrived at St. Catherine's Dock, now spiffed up as a tourist area—an old warehouse having become Dickens Inn, and junks from Hong Kong, old sailing barges, tugboats, and lightships having been assembled to lend a marine air.

From the time of the Huguenots, the refugees from less hospitable nations fetched up on the docks and moved into spare quarters in the East End. The first synagogue was started by Jews from Portugal and Spain, who were at first exiled from England and then allowed back in by Cromwell. Selling secondhand clothes became a Sunday tradition along Petticoat Lane, and it still exists, although many Jews have moved out, their places taken by Pakistanis and other citizens of Commonwealth countries who have turned to the old colonial motherland to be quartered and cared for.

Although it may be contrary to strict Jewish dietary law, one of the staples of the East End is shellfish, sold on colorful carts parked at street corners. Tubby Isaacs is the most famous of the purveyors. "We Lead, Others Follow" and "Famous for Jellied Eels," says his sign. That curious and unmanageable specialty, the jellied eel, has grown expensive, Gale assured me, but Tubby was ready with other delights—cockles, whelks, mussels, winkles, and prawns, all to be anointed with vinegar.

Fournier Street still recalls the Huguenots. At the corner where it joins Commercial Street, next door to David Kira Limited, a banana merchant, and Trafalgar Turf Accounts, Limited, a bookie, stands the Jack the Ripper Pub. It was within an area of one square mile during a six-month period in 1888 that the Ripper did in six women, all of them in horrendous fashion.

Pictures and accounts of that case, still unsolved but tellingly theorized about in *The Final Solution*, a new book by Stephen Knight (David McKay Co.), decorate the walls of the pub. The cardplayers in a corner, among the plush velvet banquettes and the potted palms, were supremely unconcerned by the now 90-year-old crime, but the vagaries and the theories about those antique horrors provided a fascinating exchange between Gale and me, sitting there on barstools and working on Cornish pasties and pints of mild and bitter. Try to do that with a cabdriver from New York. Very likely he'd answer you in Russian. ◉

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Business '78

Circus Time at W. R. Grace & Company

by Joseph Poindexter

WILL THE PHOTOGRAPH of the small town in Holland appear in the 1977 annual report of W. R. Grace and Company? Admittedly, Wall Street is not exactly abuzz with this question, and it has not been one of the more burning issues in the executive suite of the $3.6 billion chemical concern. Nevertheless, it is a question that has been asked, in one form or another, thousands of times during the past six months.

This month it will be answered. It's the month in which that unique creation of corporate America, the annual report, flowers. The New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) requires its listed companies to report to shareholders within 90 days of the close of their fiscal year and since most of them are on a calendar year, March is the month for harvesting annual reports.

March is also the month for a collective sigh—some might say gasp—from the people who produce these reports. Nowhere in the annals of periodical literature is there a publication that is, word for word and picture for picture, more painstakingly prepared, more closely scrutinized, and more expensive than the annual report.

Consider that last item for a moment. Three years ago, Corporate Annual Reports, the largest outside resource for the making of such reports, determined that the typical public company spent between 75 cents and $1.50 per copy in out-of-pocket expenses—paper, printing, freelance writing and photography, and the like. According to an NYSE survey done in 1975, there are 25 million stockholders in the United States and some 70 million stockholders of record in the survey group (44.6 million of these are accounted for by the NYSE's listed companies), which means that the out-of-pocket expenses for our annual corporate informationfest could easily exceed $100 million and run upwards of $200 million to $300 million.

Considering the money they're spending, it must have chagrined a number of corporations to learn that the typical reader of the annual report, Aunt Jane as she is known on The Street, spends less than 15 minutes with it. In fact, according to a survey conducted in 1972 by Georgeson and Company, an investor relations firm, 15 percent of the individual investors don't read the report at all.

Such figures would be truly depressing to the annual report maker except that Aunt Jane is hardly the only market. These days, the report is also aimed at such disparate groups as prospective employees, sales prospects, eighth-grade students, state and federal legislators, business journalists, and just about anybody who has to wait more than two minutes in the company's reception area.

The key reader in this multiple audience, however, is the security analyst, the specialist who studies the investment potential of publicly traded companies. Without his general approval of the corporations he is following, the prices of their stock will have a tendency to languish. Undervalued stock, in turn, invites unfriendly take-over attempts and dulls stock option plans.

All of which brings us back to the question of cost. Aunt Jane aside, there is a lot of competition for the security analyst's time, and there are plenty of other companies out there trying to win the hearts and minds of that multiple audience. As a result, the recent history of annual reports has been one of increasingly brilliant graphs, maps, and, especially, four-color photographs (often produced by $1,000-a-day-plus-expenses photographers). Responsible for this year's Babcock and Wilcox annual report, Robert Quinlan says, "It's become a kind of corporate keeping up with the Joneses."

A few corporations have managed to remain above the fray. General Motors and E. I. du Pont de Nemours, both of which still turn out conservative, even stuffy, reports, are notable examples. And others fashion their reports to the special circumstances of the year. Reflecting a $450 million write-off of its Chilean facilities, Anaconda's 1973 report was an austere, no-pictures, no-nonsense opus. Just as the company adjusted to its smaller enterprise, its 1974 annual had modest sketches in two-color; its 1975 combined a four-color cover with black-and-white photos inside.

For the rest, however, the annual report is the corporation's best foot forward. And the tendency today is to give it a patent leather shine. David Bickford, an annual report consultant, puts it this way: "If you've got something to hide, put it in the 10K; if you have a story to tell, tell it in the annual report."

Determining which story to tell, and how to tell it, exacts a price that is not reflected in annual report figures: a good deal of high-salaried executive time. And even the smoothest-run annual report operation seems to absorb vast amounts of that.

Take the matter of that Dutch town. The Grace annual report's production flow is clearly one of the more rational. It starts, in effect, right after the annual meeting, when James G. Stier, director of investor and shareholder relations, gathers his staff for a critique of the just-completed report. By midsummer, Stier is working with top management to map out an approach to the next annual report; he begins to gather pictures in September; in December he is writing the editorial section of the report; by late January the financials, as they are called, are being put into place. The whole thing is sent to the printer near the end of February and hauled to the post office by mid-March.

This year, the Grace annual is designed around a series of dramatic pictures of the company's massive fixed assets: its plant and its transportation facilities. The Dutch town surfaced from the company's photo library when it was discovered that a Grace facility was buried in the middle of a lovely aerial view of the town. Sure, it was a Grace plant, argued Stier, but the picture was out of step with the feeling of massiveness imparted by the photographs of other Grace structures. On sheer pictorial quality, however, the photo had strong appeal, and it won the backing of the senior executive on the five-man annual report committee.

Does form follow function? What price thematic consistency? Stier, a graduate of Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, considered the matter and drew up a careful memo to the senior executive, summarizing the arguments on both sides and restating his conviction that the annual report would be better off without the little town in Holland. "He [the executive] is wavering," Stier remarked in early January. "I think we have a chance of changing his mind." As this is being written, the

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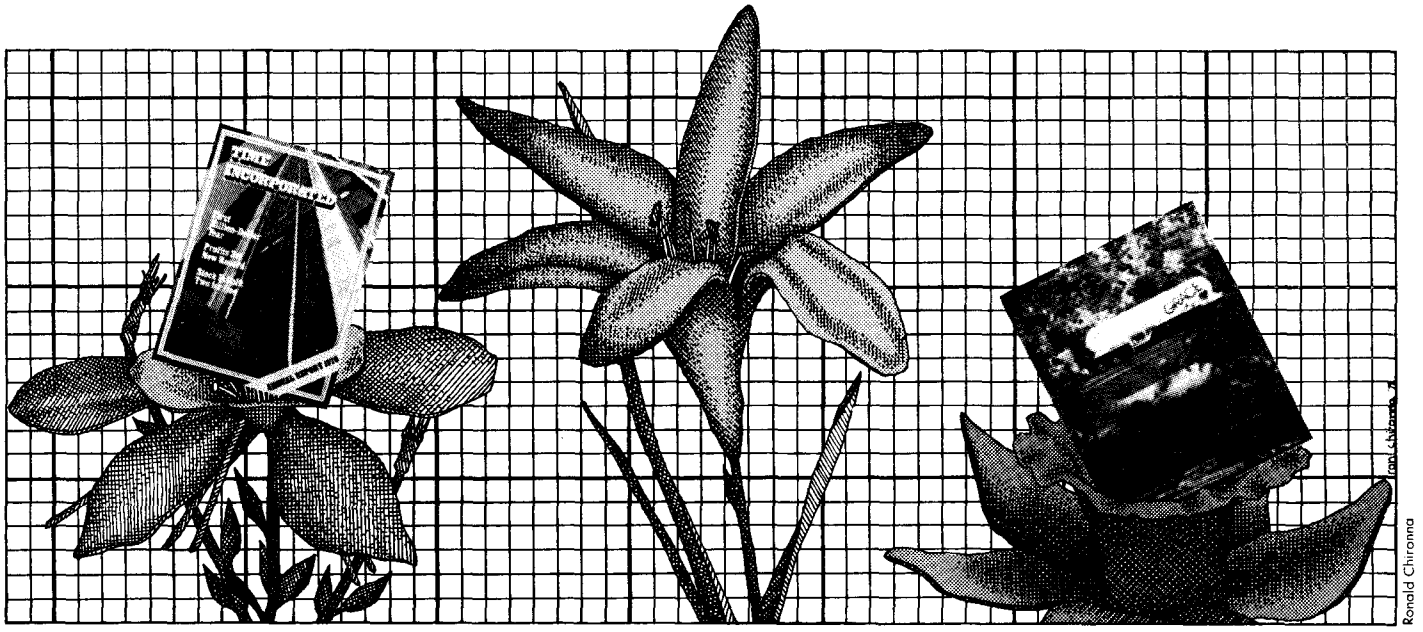

issue is still in doubt.

Debates like this one, some of them at a much higher decibel level, play contrapuntally during annual report season. What's more, there doesn't seem to be any other way to do an annual report, which most companies claim represents the single most important document they will publish all year. It makes sense, therefore, that it must also represent the widest possible agreement among those in the company's management. Getting that agreement and still maintaining a semblance of freshness and vitality in the report is one of the small, unheralded triumphs of the modern corporation.

Annual report counterpoint is provided by a cadre of executives who, for one reason or another, review the report while it is in the making. Typically, little love is lost between the annual report writer and the reviewers. In one corporation, the reviewers are referred to as "X number of cooks all wanting to get their ladle into the broth"; in another, the "quote interested parties unquote." Furthermore, their numbers tend to increase every year. The reason for this is that inclusion in the reviewing loop confers on a reviewer membership in an influential elite.

By all accounts, this inner circle seems to be about equally divided between those who return the preliminary draft with nothing more than their initials on it and those who undertake a complete rewrite of it. To curb the latter, one writer has taken to circulating a draft that is typed to look as if it has been typeset. "It has an air of permanence about it," he says. This ruse is useless, of course, against the one reviewer in every corporation who waits until the report is in galleys before he sends down voluminous alterations.

Of course, the tardy reviewer can be delivered a deadline beyond which no corrections will be accepted, but he can also be dealt with more gently. When Charles Windsor, who is now promotion director of *Family Weekly*, was handling the annual report for Sterling Communications, the cable television company that has since been absorbed into Time Inc., his chairman was the guilty party. Windsor pried a particularly late draft from his chairman with a one-sentence memo: "How's the annual report coming along?" Pasted above this was a small picture of Windsor, his face frozen in an expression of terror.

This give-and-take among the levels of influence will continue to bring out the best in political stratagem and tactical ploy. However, what is foremost in the minds of annual report makers these days is not the internal process but the influence from outside the corporation. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has over recent years required that the annual report carry an increasing amount of financial information and management analysis. Ten years ago only a handful of items were mandatory: the name and the address of the corporation, the names and the affiliations of the board of directors, a profit and loss statement, a balance sheet, and a few others.

Today that list includes two years of financial statements, a summary of operations, a breakdown of the company's lines of business, and a management analysis of what happened and why, each of the last three items covering a five-year period. And the SEC has called for still more information in the 1978 report.

But probably the most troublesome of recent SEC requests is an item called the replacement cost footnote. Vigilant shareholders noticed its premiere appearance in last year's annual report. Normally, a corporation states the value of its assets according to what it has paid for them. Replacement cost is what the corporation would have to pay if it were to replace all of its existing plant and inventory at today's cost. The new requirement was meant to indicate what impact changing technology and inflation would have on the company's balance sheet.

Aside from the carp that such information seemed highly theoretical (what company would replace all of its assets simultaneously?), corporations complained about the cost of developing such information. American Telephone and Telegraph, with massive fixed assets, once estimated that it would cost $1 million to come up with accurate figures. Actually only a summary of the replacement cost footnote is required in the annual report, but some in the business community say that even that is too much. "The annual report," says Roland Voorhees, who as assistant secretary and assistant treasurer has turned out a good many of them for Union Carbide Corporation, "has gotten all cluttered up with material that the average stockholder couldn't care less about."

All of this suggests that after you have digested your company's profit performance, its growth pattern over the past five years, and the words of inspiration from the president, you might sit back and just marvel at it for a moment as a masterful balancing of the regulatory, the accounting profession, and the executive review board forces. The annual report may not pop with wit and metaphor these days, but it certainly is a brilliant juggling act. ◉

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Light Refractions

Computer Capers

by Thomas H. Middleton

I'VE HEARD that the next marvelous electronic device destined to become, like color television, a necessity for every civilized home is the household-model computer. God only knows what it will do for and to our lives. I think it's supposed to free us to do more important things, like discovering new sources of energy to run our computers. I suspect that it will create several boxcarfuls of mischief in the process.

I know a few people—a very few—who are fascinated by computers to the point of blind adulation. They are given to saying things like "The human mind is nothing but an inefficient computer." I know others who blame computers for much of the impersonal quality of our lives and times.

Most of us probably fall in between these extremes. For my own part, I curse computers for infesting the language with terms like *input*, *readout*, and *interface*.

On the other hand, without computers the space program wouldn't have been possible; we wouldn't have Teflon; and there wouldn't be a plaque out there on the moon bearing the name of President Richard M. Nixon. And without computers there wouldn't be those newspaper stories about the poor but honest shoemaker whose bank, because of a "computer error," issues him a cashier's check for $50 million instead of $50 and who, with an improbable smile that doesn't hide the strain with which he overcomes everyman's larcenous impulse, returns the check.

In fact, without computers there would be no computer error, and human beings would once again be held responsible for their goofs.

I suppose that without computer error, or perhaps computer caprice, I'd never have heard of an attorney in Oakland, California, by the effervescent name of Nubar Tashjian. The other day, I got a letter from Tashjian saying:

During the course of the past year, I have increasingly become the recipient of numerous invitations to certain subscriptions, to join museums, art galleries, and the like. When the volume of my "junk mail" increased...I realized that I was not only addressed by my name but... as "Attorney for T Middleton," with no period after the T. And as the volume of my mail increased, I wondered, "Who could this miraculous T Middleton be?"

Naturally, I allowed my fantasies to range at will. T Middleton must now be in his magnificent yacht in the Caribbean. T Middleton is concluding a big deal with Middle Eastern Oil Sultans. T Middleton has just discovered an enormous fissure in the North Pole.

Just the other day, it occurred to me that T Middleton may be none other than the Thomas H. Middleton who writes ... Light Refractions for the *Saturday Review*.

He scotch-taped his *Saturday Review* address label to the letter. There it was: NUBAR TASHJIAN, ATTORNEY FOR T MIDDLETON.

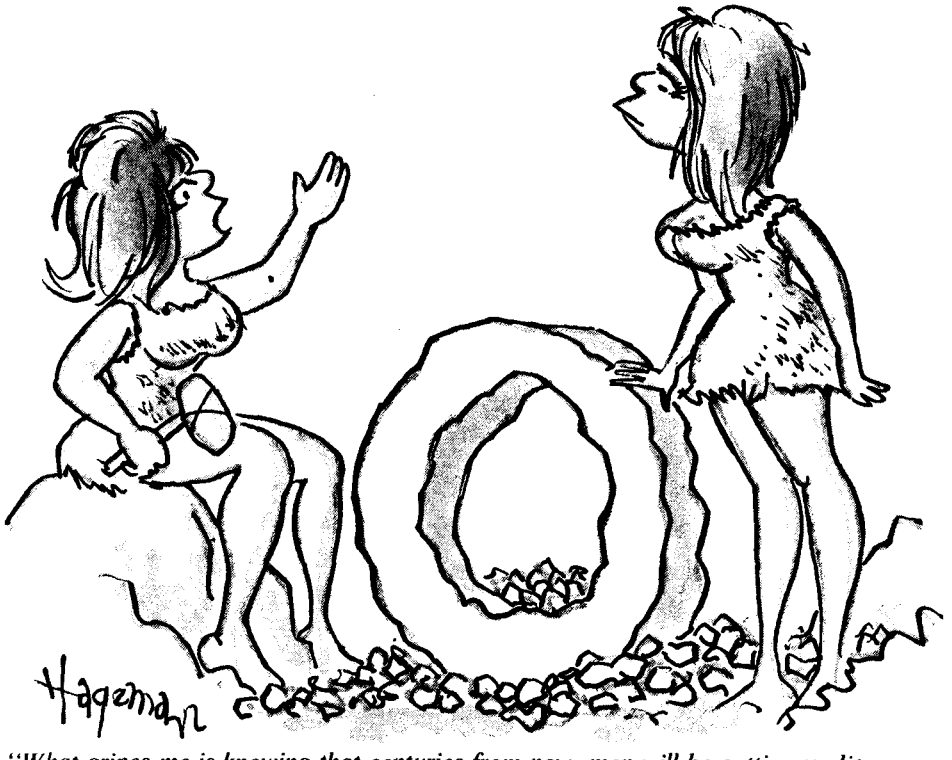
If it had said "ATTORNEY FOR L NIZER," with the implication of "a lawyer's lawyer," I could understand that second line, but "ATTORNEY FOR T MIDDLETON" strikes me as the ultimate in insignificance. I wonder if I am, indeed, the T Middleton the computer had in mind—or on tape—when it joined Tashjian and Middleton, and I wonder whose computer did the original deed. Evidently, other computers have got into the act, since not only *SR* but also lots of junk mail bears the same address.

For years, publishers of juvenile books have been sending me catalogs addressed to LIBRARIAN, THOMAS H MIDDLETON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL. I can't imagine what weird computer dreamed up a junior high school named for me—or, since I am actually Thomas H. Middleton, Jr., did the computer dream up a *high school* named for me? My friend Bob Van Scoyk, whose sons attended Paul Revere Junior High School, once asked me if I knew why anyone would name a high school after Paul Revere, Jr. It makes at least as much sense as naming a nonexistent high school after me.

Computers are a complete mystery to me, and I suppose they'll stay that way. I'm flattered at their having given me a high school, but I'd rather not find out why they did it.

I phoned Nubar Tashjian at his office in Oakland. He sounds like a good guy. I don't suppose we'll ever know whether or not I'm the T Middleton the computers say he's the attorney for. I don't mind being the one, as long as he doesn't expect a retainer from me.

On the other hand, if he'll give me back my yacht in the Caribbean... ◉



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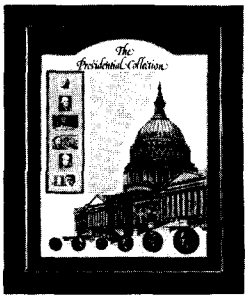

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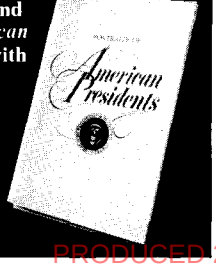

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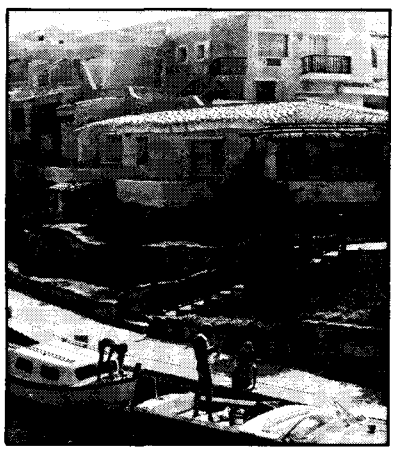

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May 27, 1978

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iceman, anemic, cinema

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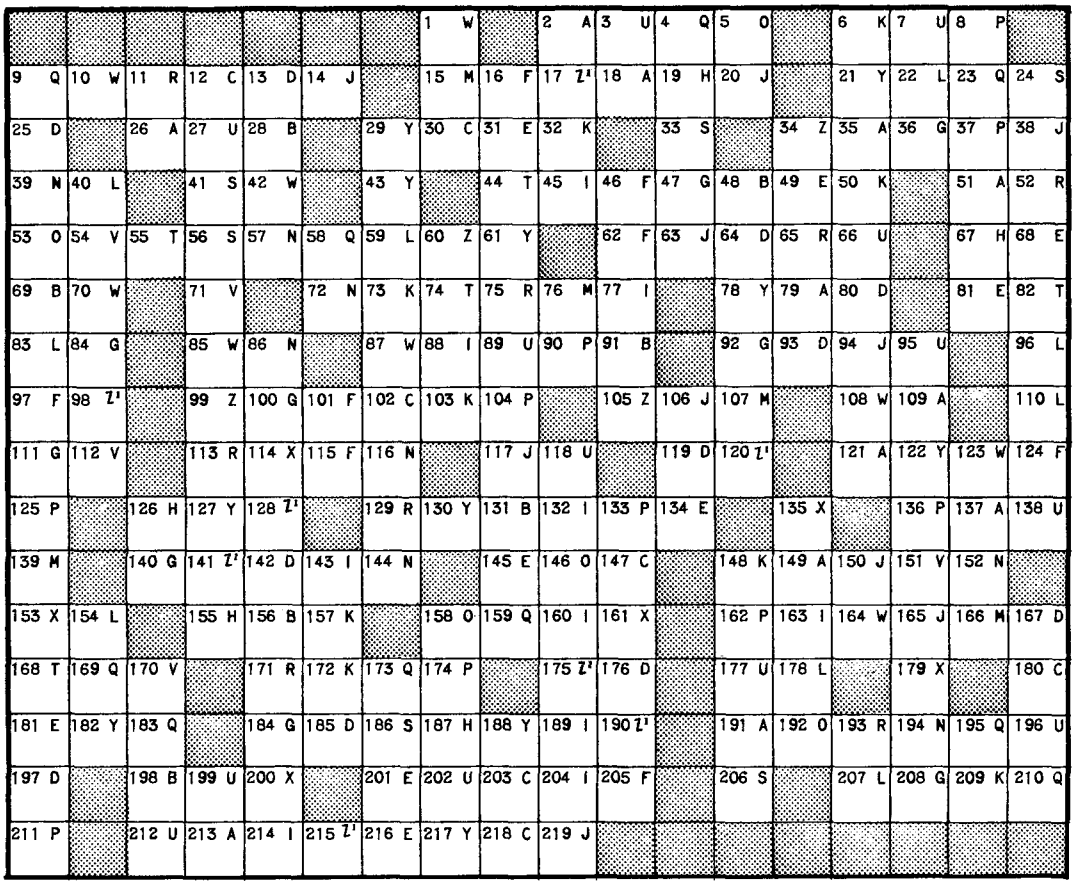

Number 144

Instructions

If you've never solved one of these puzzles, it will probably look much more difficult than it actually is. If you can answer only a very few of the WORDS correctly, you're on your way to solving the puzzle.

Fill in the numbered blanks of all the WORDS you can guess and write the letter of each numbered blank in its correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. The letters printed in the upper-right-hand corners of the squares indicate from what WORD a particular square's letter comes.

The diagram, when filled in, should read as a quotation from a published work. The dark squares are the spaces between words. If there is no dark square at the end of a line, a word may carry over to the line below.

The first letter of each WORD, reading down, will spell the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

You should find yourself seeing words and phrases taking form in the diagram; so you can work back and forth, from WORDS to diagram and from diagram to WORDS, until the diagram is filled in.

Answer to ***Double-Crostic No. 143*** appears on page 38.

CLUES — **WORDS**

A. Pig-headed, refractory — 2 18 26 35 213 109 121 51 79 137 149 191

B. Another name for the wild mulberry — 131 156 198 28 48 69 91

C. Transylvania's country — 102 147 180 203 218 12 30

D. Unfading, everlasting — 64 80 93 167 185 13 25 119 142 176 197

E. "O Julius Caesar, thou art ____!" says Brutus (2 wds.) — 216 31 49 68 81 134 145 181 201

F. Grips, holds; engaging mechanisms — 16 46 101 115 62 97 124 205

G. Type of service error in tennis (2 wds.) — 92 100 111 140 184 208 36 47 84

H. Acknowledge, concede — 126 155 187 19 67

I. Penniless (comp.) — 77 88 132 143 160 189 214 45 163 204

J. Highly pleasing — 14 38 63 94 150 165 219 117 106 20

K. "That large utterance of the ____" (2 wds.; Keats, "Hyperion") — 50 73 172 209 157 6 148 32 103

L. State or period of being a beginner — 110 154 207 22 40 59 83 96 178

M. Scrap, run-in (comp.) — 15 76 107 139 166

N. Atoll in the northwest Marshall Islands — 194 39 57 72 86 152 116 144

CLUES — **WORDS**

O. Expression of guiding principle — 53 192 5 158 146

P. Foolish, silly — 162 37 125 90 104 174 133 8 211 136

Q. Only (2 wds.) — 183 195 58 159 173 4 23 9 210 169

R. Clement Yeobright's cousin (*Return of the Native*) — 171 11 52 193 129 65 113 75

S. Major prophet of the *eighth century* B.C. — 186 56 33 41 206 24

T. "Oh May I Join the ____ Invisible" (George Eliot poem) — 44 82 55 168 74

U. English lexicographer, critic, and poet (1709–84; full name) — 118 3 177 89 7 95 212 199 202 196 66 27 138

V. Succinct, pointed, meaty — 54 71 112 151 170

W. About to occur, imminent (3 wds.) — 1 70 164 85 10 87 108 42 123

X. Fool, boob, simpleton — 114 135 153 200 179 161

Y. Hollywood's "oomph girl" (1915–67; *Good Sam*; full name) — 43 61 127 29 78 217 21 188 122 182 130

Z. Short-legged, thick-set horses — 99 60 105 34

Z1. Old World, insectivorous mammal having spiny hairs on the back and the sides — 17 98 128 190 120 141 175 215

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A Huzzah for Happy Endings

"Massive or slight, good art exists like a good citizen in the community—sane, responsible, optimistic, and unflinchingly honest."

AFTER I'D FINISHED dabbing my eyes over a recent charming romantic comedy, I felt like apologizing. Happy endings are okay for sudsy TV serials and commercials, I thought, but for a supposedly intelligent, supposedly critical person to *like* them, well, that could only be a lapse of judgment or, worse, a lack of taste. In an era when nihilistic Samuel Beckett, cynical Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., and despairing Joseph Heller are among the larger busts in our artistic/critical pantheon, a happy movie comes to seem willfully anachronistic or naïve or both—in any case, not worth more than a dismissive sneer. So I felt guilty, un-hip, old-fashioned about liking a film so positive.

Then I read John Gardner's *On Moral Fiction*.

Rarely does a book appear that says something that needs saying—and says it so sensibly, eloquently, and intelligently that one can't help exclaiming "Thank God!" and heaving a sigh of relief. *On Moral Fiction* is such a book.

Elsewhere in this issue (see page 29) is an excerpt from Gardner's essay. What I'd like to discuss is how his book clears the air.

For several decades, sensitive laymen and some critics have complained about the gap between "serious art" and popular taste. The heralded "masters" of the era have been producing art from which the public defects in droves. Post-Schoenbergian concert music has been mostly either cacophonous or disconcerting; post-Poundian poetry has been obscure; post-Duchampian modern art exhibitions have been either sights for sore eyes or inexplicable assemblages of ordinary objects—park benches, urinals—christened "art." Critics have conspired to convince the public of our ignorance and unsophistication if we fail to derive pleasure from these displays. The arts and arts criticism have become the exclusive provinces of specialists who can survey the terrain and return with maps and recommended tours. The phrase "I know what I like" has come to characterize the artistic rube, the laughable, often moneyed bumpkin who believes that he can discern talent without years of indoctrination into the theories behind contemporary art.

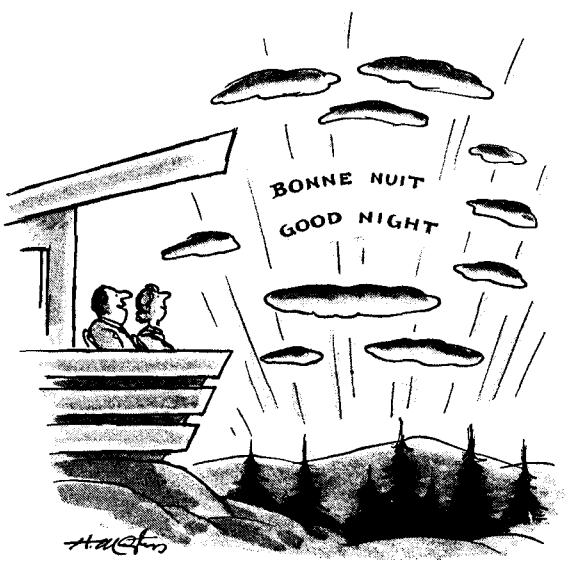
During these years, the ordinary person who—because he loved Brahms, Yeats, and Ingres—thought of himself as an art lover has become increasingly bewildered by and alienated from contemporary styles. He has felt uncomfortably old-fashioned, deficient in insight and education, put out and put down by the arts establishment.

In *On Moral Fiction*, John Gardner does not slap us all on the back and say, hey fellas, you were right all along, and they (the arts establishment) were all full of it, con persons enamored of their own nonsense. But he does argue that ordinary, non-"expert" opinions matter, that any man is as capable as the next of judging what is good art.

For good art to Gardner is "moral" art, art whose purpose is "to make people good by choice." What "good" means is difficult to express but easy to recognize. The sane parent desires that his child grow up good, "doing what is unselfish, helpful, kind, and noble-hearted, and doing it with at least a reasonable expectation that in the long run as well as the short [he] won't be sorry for what [he's] done, whether or not it was against some petty human law." Unless art appeals to its audience viscerally as well as intellectually, unless art involves us in its processes and makes us care about its conclusions, it fails to fulfill its mission. Art that slams the door in our faces, that says "screw you" to the earnest (if unindoctrinated) seeker of understanding, is immoral art—as is art that sets up cads, cynics, or escapists as admirable models. Good art, moral art, attempts to be both accessible to its audience and truthful to a higher vision of what the world ought to be. Massive or slight, good art exists like a good citizen in the community—sane, responsible, optimistic, and unflinchingly honest.

The romantic comedy I sniffled at was hardly *War and Peace* or even *Annie Hall*, but it was an enjoyable, well-observed, well-constructed, and well-intentioned entertainment that suggested that love is preferable to spiritual refrigeration and that happy endings are possible in this smugly anti-idealistic age. It was a movie that made me feel good about the world, and thanks to John Gardner, I am no longer inclined to apologize for liking it.

—CARLL TUCKER



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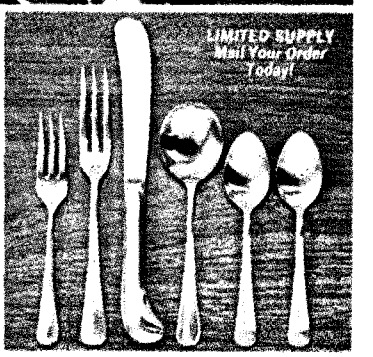

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